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THE WORKS OF
DONALD G. MITCHELL

AMERICAN
LANDS AND
PEOPLES

THE MAYFLOWER TO
RIP VAN WINKLE



CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK * * * * 1907

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SCOTT

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THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
TO THOSE DAUGHTERS OF EDGEWOOD
WHO HAVE HELPED THE AUTHOR IN SO MANY
SEARCHING AND HOUSEWIFELY WAYS AND WHO HAVE
ENCOURAGED HIM BY KINDLY INSISTING—OVER
AND OVER—THAT THIS LITTLE BOOK
WAS A GREAT DEAL BETTER
THAN IT REALLY IS
GOD BLESS THEM!

D. G. M.

FEBRUARY 22, 1897.

PREFACE

As I became interested in the subject-matter of this volume, there grew upon me a fear that it would run to inordinate length—except some bounds were fixed; hence, no writer is dwelt upon whose birth-date belongs in the present century. This limit shuts off a distinguished group of authors—born in the first decade of this century—whose names come to the thought of all intent upon American literary work. The critics will say, with the justice always distinguishing them—the book should have been longer and covered more names; or, shorter and dealt with fewer writers, or—in some way, should have been—quite other than it is. Indeed, upon “a reading of the proofs” I have unwittingly drifted into agreement with such possible damning phrases, and have, again and again, under the imagined critical guidance, inclined to the confession that “I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and have done those things which I ought not to have done.”

PREFACE

The reader will surely miss the nice particularity and fulness of Professor Tyler—a fulness and particularity which, unfortunately, grievously delays the conclusion of his valuable work. Nor is there here that dash and large embracement of far-away periods that characterizes the terse handling of Professor Beers, who has put two centuries of literary flow into a quart flagon. Again, the little mosaic of illustrative extracts in these pages must appear quite petty beside that voluminous and pains-taking aggregation of American literature, which bears the names of Mr. Stedman and of Miss Hutchinson upon its forefront.

But why, pray, should the minister to a quiet country parish stay his voice, though he cannot equal the sons of Zebedee or any Boanerges of the Pulpit? He may still lead his own flock by cooling waters, and into the shadow of some great rock—by those unfrequented paths, that some happy accident has determined, rather than by the conventional high-roads where signs are “out,” and where crowds are travelling—because crowds are there.

I have talked in these pages of those whose qualities or surroundings have invited the talk; sometimes a modest retiracy has piqued my mention; sometimes a caprice has been followed

PREFACE

which I cannot explain, nor wholly justify; I have made much of slight clews, and have dwelt sometimes upon those whom the critics have relegated to “back-benches”; in short, I have tried to make this an “own book” and not an echo of the distinguished likes or dislikes of this or that expositor.

And now, my masters (which means my readers), let us jog on—leaving conventions behind!

EDGEWOOD, 1897.

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AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

I

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

CHAPTER I

It should be said at the very start upon this story of Early American Letters—as the author took occasion to say in some kindred talks regarding English Letters and Kings—that his aim is not so much to give instruction about the subjects brought under review, as to kindle interest in them, by certain allowable piquancies of treatment, and so provoke his readers to a wider study amongst sources that are ampler and more fully accredited.

Although our story is an American one, we do not find ourselves, at the start, wholly out of reach of kings and of kingly prerogatives. Royal influences, of favor and of disfavor, swayed largely those new and feeble currents of English life and letters which were astir beyond the Atlantic. Elizabeth heard with princely grace the stories of those who after storms and stress of strange seas had found rich lands lying between Albemarle waters and the Chesapeake, and had called them in her

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honor—Virginia.' The pedagogic James, her successor, lent ponderous and pragmatic approval to over-ocean voyagings, and to those treasure-searchings which over-weighted Sir Walter Raleigh to his death; while poor Charles I., with his abettors, Laud and Strafford, put such wrath and persistence into his anti-Puritanism as pushed many a British doubter into the westward migration.

But if there is long reach to royal charters, permissions, and crowns, there is no such long reach to the leaden skies of Delft Haven and to the veilings of fog which hang over the harbors of South Devon. The cool, brisk winds of the outer Atlantic blow them to tatters. Bland skies beam on the voyagers to the lower waters of the Chesapeake, and a welcoming sun shines on the beach where now rises the glittering façade of a great Point Comfort hostelry.

THE BEGINNINGS

NEW settlers in a strange country, setting about the making of homesteads, are not insistent upon niceties: their first wallings-in of great stones rolled together are uncouth, without proportions, yet solid, well-poised, holding their

BEGINNINGS

own by reason of their weight; planted on good rock bottom—frosts not heaving them over-much; not much chinking with small stuff that falls away by reason of its smallness; but in progress of years all the work showing better and finer structure—finer and finer—tooling and ornamentation opening into sight at gap-ways and abutments; so much tooling at last—so wearisome a smoothness, that the mosses which drape always with their green honors ponderous honest material, do not invest the finical niceties that grow upon later stages of development. It is a clumsy figure to be sure, but will serve to set before you the point I would insist upon—that great and strong beginnings of whatever work are very apt to carry a certain uncouthness and unhammered savagery of shape; and I cannot help counting the pluck and daring and straightforwardness of those early New England fathers of ours, as capital things, and steady things to put into the foundations of any literature structure that should grow up west of the Atlantic. And when I speak of New England fathers, I do not overlook or forget those yet earlier Virginia voyagers who went in by the Capes, who encountered perils by the “still-vex’d” Bermudas—

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these last so vigorously set forth in old records,¹ as very possibly to have kindled Shakespeare into the wilder notes of his "Tempest." There was Captain John Smith,² too, rattling in his mail, and lighting up his adventures by sea or land with such stories as that never-dull, but much-doubted, romance of Pocahontas. There were qualities in this adventurous son of a Lincolnshire farmer that would have admirably have fitted him for a journalist of our time; alert, graphic, resolute, pulling a long bow on occasions, and telling of uncommon—not to say impossible—occurrences in a way which seemed to make them delightfully true. He made ravishing pictures of the wooded headlands which broke into the Chesapeake waters, and of the brooks that came laughing and dancing down the mountain valleys. But there was stern stuff in him, though he put pretty bird-warblings into his periods, and not dangers or din of near battles daunted him.

¹ Jourdan. *A Discovery of the Barmudas*, etc. Vid. 5th vol. Hakluyt's Voyages, 1812; also Strachey's *True Repertory*, etc., Purchas, vol. iv.

² John Smith, b. 1579; d. 1631. His *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles*, etc., first published 1624. For interesting sketch of the life and work of Captain Smith see opening pages of Professor Tyler's *American Literature*.

STRACHEY AND SANDYS

I cannot forbear giving a taste of this valorous Captain's manner of writing: it is from his *Description of New England*,¹ whose shores he had explored five or six years before the landing at Plymouth:—

“What pleasure can be more, than (being tired with any occasion ashore) in planting Vines, Fruits, or Hearbs, in contriving their own Grounds, to the pleasure of their owne mindes, their Fields, Gardens, Orchards &c., to recreate themselves before their owne doores, in their owne boates upon the Sea, where man woman and childe, with a small hooke and line, by angling, may take diverse sorts of excellent fish, at their pleasures? And is it not pretty sport to pull up two pence, six pence, or twelve pence, as fast as you can hale and veare a line? . . . If a man worke but three dayes in seaven, he may get more than he can spend, unless he will be excessive. . . . And what sport doth yeeld a more pleasing, content, and lesse hurt or charge than angling with a hooke, and crossing the sweete ayre from Ile to Ile, over the silent streames of a Calme Sea?”

A certain William Strachey was another writing and moralizing voyager of those early

¹ First published in 1616, and relating to voyages made in 1614-16.

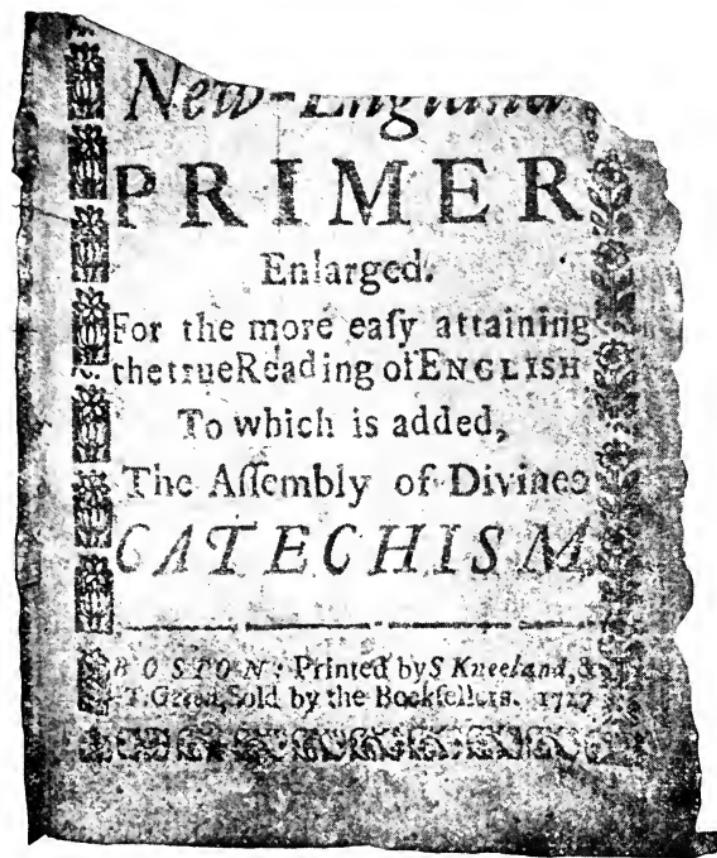
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times in Virginia, who wrote a wonderfully graphic story of storm and wreck on the Bermudan coasts—a *Salvator Rosa* picturing of winds and waves—which has honorable embalmment in the pages of *Purchas his Pilgrimes*. Nor must I forget that George Sandys,¹ a full-blooded British poet, who carried his fine Van-dyke collar of lace, and his well-waxed mustachios (after the barber manner of his sovereign, Charles I.) to the shores of the James River; and he completed there a most musical translation of Ovid, under the stress of Indian alarms, and in the intervals of running a mill and building ironworks—before yet there was a printing-press, or a school-house, or an established family home anywhere in New England.

NORTHERN PILGRIMS

BUT if poems, and stone chapels—which were veritable daughters of the English mother church—and ambitious country-houses with fat dinners, and hunting chaplains to say grace, came first to Virginia shores, school-houses and a printing-press and long inexorable sermons, came earliest to New England; and out of these

¹ George Sandys, b. 1577; d. 1644, in Kent, England.



Title-page of "The New-England Primer"

NORTHERN PILGRIMS

roots grew the first printed volume of the *Bay Psalm Book*, and later, the imposing periods of Mather's *Magnalia*. If there was no harmonious rendering of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, there was a metamorphosis of old accredited Bible truths (as they were then counted) into those rhythmic little pellets of sound—not yet gone from the memory of those taught to recite out of the *New England Primer* —

“In *Adam's* fall we sinnéd all.”

“Young, pious *Ruth*, left all for truth.”

“*Zaccheus* he, did climb the tree
His Lord to see.”

There were no literary ambitions there, cropping out untimely; no brooding over books for the books' sake; there were plenty of men indeed among the new-comers who had been bred at Oxford or Cambridge; but those delightful university visions of prowess and of fame, which hover before all young minds, were broken up among the soothings of the great pines that clouded the hills, and were striding through wastes of snow.

They need to *do* things seemed, under these new and rare Western lights, so much larger than the need to write about them. There are those who tell us John Milton might have come

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with his friend Winthrop, and then there might have been a *Paradise Lost* dating from Higganum or Pawtucket: it seems to me very doubtful. The multitudinous and pressing wants here would have laid other hold upon the large mind of the poet, and the great Spring floods would have drowned Castalia. Even the *Samson Agonistes* would, I think, have had his classic locks shorn at Naumkeag; plenty of thunders there would have been, with perhaps added flame and wrath in his Speech for the *Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*; and still larger and weightier declamation against the *Eikon Basiliæ*—but no murmurous diapason of sweet sounds about “Russet lawns and fallows gray.”

The great Mr. Waller, too, was in the plentitude of his powers in those early New England days; but who can fancy this distinguished master of phrase and sentiment plucking any rose for his Saccharissa in wet Massachusetts bog-lands? Naturally those Boston Bay and Plymouth folk—weathering it as they best could against Indians, storms, and short crops,—would wish, first, in writing way, to make known to their good friends on the other side how they had fared by sea and land, and what struggles were at hand.

QUAINT ANNALISTS

But in doing this, whether journal-wise or by letters, there is not much strain among them to say fine things; there are, of course, some exaggerations and a painting red of the Indian dangers; but, upon the whole, business-like, common sense setting down of those matters which friends would most wish to know of.

QUAINT ANNALISTS

THERE was old Governor Bradford¹ for instance (who immediately succeeded the first Governor—Carver) and whose home once stood upon that corner of Leyden Street, Plymouth, where now a “Pilgrime Book Store” attracts the wayfarer; he wrote in good, staunch English, what was called a *History of Plymouth Plantation*, which was much cribbed from by succeeding annalists—was lost and found again in these latter days, and is still of excellent repute among those who delve among the foundations of Colonial history. The succeeding Governor—Winslow—puts even more of piquancy into his record, and warned those

¹ William Bradford, b. about 1590; d. 1657. His account of the first year at Plymouth—written in connection with Governor Edward Winslow, long known as *Mourt's Relation*, published 1622.

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who might be forecasting the over-ocean voyage that the fountains about Plymouth do not “stream forth wine or beer, or the woods and rivers be like butcher shops or fishmonger stalls;” and he continues—

“If thou canst not live without such things and hast no means to procure the one, and will not take pains for the other, nor hast ability to employ others for thee, rest where thou art, for, as a proud heart, a dainty tooth, a beggar’s purse, and an idle hand, be here [in England] intolerable, so that person that hath these qualities is much more abominable there.”

Here and there we come upon a rare bit of pathos in the records of these old annalists, which is the more touching because it is unstudied. The worshipful Anthony Thacher,¹ for instance, after making safe voyage over seas with his little family, came to grievous mishap and wreck in sailing only from Boston to Marblehead; and this is the way he tells of it:—

“The mariners, because it was night, would not put to new sails, but resolved to cast anchor till

¹ Anthony Thacher, b. about 1588; d. 1668; author of a narrative incorporated with Increase Mather’s *Illustrious Providences*, from which our excerpt is taken.

THACHER'S WRECK

the morning. But before daylight it pleased the Lord to send so mighty a storm, as the like was never known in New England. . . . It was so furious, that our anchor came home, whereupon the mariners let out more cable, which at last slipped away. Then our sailors knew not what to do, but we were driven before the wind and waves. . . . And as my cousin, his wife, and my tender babes sat comforting and cheering one the other in the Lord, against ghastly death, which every moment stared us in the face, and sat triumphing upon each one's forehead, we were by the violence of the waves and fury of the winds lifted upon a rock between two high rocks—yet all was one rock."

Then follow minute details of how the pinnace he was upon, is wrenched in pieces—how one after another of the occupants are swept away—of their religious communings together, till he too (Master Anthony), is torn from his hold, and with many buffetings finds his way to shoal water.

"I made haste to get out; but was thrown down on my hands with the waves, and so with safety crept to the dry shore, where, blessing God, I turned to look for my children and friends, but saw neither, nor any part of the pinnace where I left them as I supposed.

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“Now came to my remembrance the time and manner how and when (so little while ago) I last saw and left my children and friends. One was severed from me, sitting on the rock at my feet, the other there in the pinnace; my little babe (ah, poor *Peter!*) sitting in his sister *Edith’s* arms, who to the uttermost of her power sheltered him from the waters; my poor *William* standing close unto them, all three of them looking ruefully on me upon the rock; their very countenances calling on me to help them; whom I could not go unto, neither could they come at me, neither would the merciless waves afford me space or time to use any means at all, either to help them or myself. Oh, I yet see their cheeks, poor, silent lambs, pleading pity and help at my hands.

“Then it came to my mind how I had occasioned the death of my children, who caused them to leave their native land who might have left them there; yea, and might have sent some of them back again, and cost me nothing. These and such like thoughts do press down my heavy heart very much.”

These are touches which would not ill-match with some of the best by the author of Dr. Jekyll.

THOMAS MORTON

MORTON OF MERRY-MOUNT

ANOTHER noticeable reporter of his bad-farrings (of quite different sort) near to the Puritan settlements was that Thomas Morton,¹ who established himself at Merry-Mount (Wollaston Heights), on the shores of Boston Bay, and set up there once upon a time that famous Maypole which scandalized all the Plymouth fathers, and which in later days Hawthorne and Motley both have invested, each in his own way, with romantic color. This Morton was a sort of Roger Wildrake—gone astray; loving his laugh, and his gun, and his dinner, and his pipe: a university man withal; keen, sharp—good at a bargain for beaver skins;—contriving to secure a small retinue of servitors about him, who loved junketings as well as he. He may have known, and very likely did—dates and tastes permittings—old Ben Jonson, and shared his cups; may have sung at the “Mermaid;” a curious fellow to be there on Boston hills; out of place—as he found before long;

¹ Thomas Morton, b. about 1594; d. 1646. Not to be confounded with another Morton (Nathaniel) who was in better favor with Plymouth authorities, but who—it is alleged—made rather scurvy use of Governor Bradford's MSS., for the equipment of his *New England Memorial* (published 1669).

even the *Pore Prayer-book*, for which as Conformist he professed reverence (as he did for the Established Church), could not shield him. More than once the doughty Miles Standish was on his track, with a platoon of his musqueteers, and at last pounced upon him as a disturber of the peace and an indulger in Satanic revels; his house was burned down, and he shipped back to England (1630); but he was a persistent sinner. He carried favor with those about Charles and Archbishop Laud; wrote his *New English Canaan* (first published in 1637), with witty lampoons upon the colonial magnates who had thrust him out. It contained, too, very rose-colored descriptions of the New England country and of its attractions. There are chapters relating to trees, birds, fishes, which are not bad: he looks with a sportsman's eye at all these. Of the sea-bass he says:

“I myself at the turning of the tyde have seen such multitudes . . . that it seemed to me that one might goe over their backs dri-shod.” (And again, with a touch of humor): “In divers times [wild turkies] have sallied by our doores: and there, a gunne, being commonly in a reddinesse, salutes them with such a courtesie as makes them take a turn in the Cooke room.” (Yet again,

NEW ENGLISH CANAAN

with broader touch of humor, he says of the climate): "No man living there [on Boston Bay] was ever knownne to be troubled with a colde or cough, . . . but many men coming sick out of Virginia have instantly recovered with the help of the purity of the aire."

Modern Down-easters might possibly relish such tribute to their skies; but the elder ones did not. When the adventurer Morton came again to the "New Canaan" (1643), they would none of him; and after a year's imprisonment, incontinently thrust him out:—and so this witty, well-taught, misplaced, university man, who in his prime could handle with equal deftness a rapier or a fiddle-bow or a fowling-piece, became virtually an outcast; and crazed and poor he died a few years thereafter, somewhere in that shore region of Maine—then a wilderness—on which Mount Agamenticus looks down, and where the pleasant sands of York Beach now decoy the summer idlers.

A LIBERAL PURITAN

ANOTHER far worthier writer—and a preacher too—of those times who did not get on well with his Massachusetts neighbors was Roger

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Williams¹—a name always to be honored as that of one who declared against any government meddling with a man's conscience, and who thought even savages had rights which should be respected. Few more worthy characters belong to colonial times. Faults there were in him, doubtless; but he was pure, kindly, gracious, earnest, and with a charity in all religious matters as rare in that day as it was beautiful. Within a few years—perhaps even now—the quaint old house was standing in Salem, where he lived, and where he preached to those who with a grim piety presently made him an outcast. He also was a Cambridge man; was the friend of such as Milton and Cromwell and Governor Winthrop—never in all his militant life forfeiting the good opinions of those whose mental outlook was wide. He did things rashly; but all his rashness was on the side of liberality. Possessed of rare literary skill, writing with gusto, and putting all his warmth of heart, and his burning indignations into his papers or sermons; a man to excuse—to love—to honor—rather than a man to govern and to trim the ship of state.

¹ Roger Williams, b. about 1600; d. 1684. First arrived in New England, 1631.

A Key into the Languages of America, published 1643. *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*, 1644.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Escaping from his religious and political censors of Massachusetts Colony (who would have returned him to the clutch of Laud), he found his way to the shores of Narragansett Bay: and never were the limitations and proper latitudes of a just Toleration better “put” than he presented them in his letter to those who subsequently made up his flock in Providence:—

“It hath fallen out,” he says, “sometimes that both Papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal, I affirm, that all the liberty of Conscience that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges—that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews . . . be forced to come to the ship’s prayers, or worship, if they practice any. I further add, that I never denied that, notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of the ship ought to command the ship’s course, yea, and also command that justice, peace, and sobriety be kept and practiced both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform their services or passengers to pay their freight; . . . if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common preservation; if any shall mutiny; . . . if any should preach or write that there ought to be no commanders . . . because all are equal in

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

Christ—therefore no laws, no orders—I say—I never denied but in such cases the commander may compel such transgressors according to their deserts. This, if seriously and honestly minded, may, if it so please the Father of Lights, let in some light to such as willingly shut not their eyes.”¹

There are letters, too, of Roger Williams, very readable—for the tinkle of their charities and the spirit of his indignations. Thus—to Madame Sadlier, daughter of Sir Edward Coke, and friend of his youth—he writes:—

“I have read those books you mention, and the King’s book [probably *Eikon Basilei*]. As for the King, I know his person, vicious, a swearer from his youth, and an oppressor and persecutor of good men. . . . Against his, and his blasphemous father’s cruelties, your own dear father, and many precious men, shall rise up shortly and cry for vengeance. . . . But for the book itself, if it be his and theirs, . . . I have found things sharp and witty, plausible and delightful, devout and pathetical. . . . But amongst them all . . . how few express the simplicity, the plainness, the meekness, and true humility of the learning of the Son of God.”

¹ Tyler, vol. i., p. 262.

ROGER WILLIAMS

And he goes on to commend to his friend a reading of a tractate of Milton's; nor can I forbear citing what his good lady correspondent says thereupon: "For Milton's book that you desire I should read, that is he, if I be not mistaken, that has wrote a book of the lawfulness of Divorce; and, if report says true, he had at that time two or three wives living! . . . God has begun his judgment upon him here—his punishment will be hereafter in hell!" Naturally she declines to read Milton's books. Is it not pleasantly confirmatory of the wide-lying charities of this Puritan father that he should entertain as correspondent a lady capable of such newpaperiness-looseness of invective!

Roger Williams lived to a great age, and was buried in Providence—the city he founded as a fugitive: a noble bronze statue of him may be seen there; and a great farm, within the town limits, which descended from him in direct line through successive generations, was, in the year 1870, bequeathed to the city for a public park—fitting memorial of the large-hearted and eloquent man who was always watchful and tender of the interests of the people.

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

THE COBBLER OF AGAWAM

THE Rev. Nathaniel Ward¹ was a sharper type of the average Massachusetts preacher; a man of incisive wit—more literary aptitudes than belonged to most clergymen, and as intolerant of all wanderings from the strait paths of Calvinism as Roger Williams was tolerant. He was chiefly known by his *Simple Cobler of Aggawamm*—a curiously clever booklet, full of puns, full of punches with his awl into the faiths of all strayers from that orthodoxy which was *his* doxy; “I dare take upon me,” he says, “to be the herald of New England, so far as to proclaim to the world in the name of our colony, that all Familists, Antinomians and Baptists, and other enthusiasts shall have free liberty to keep away from us; and such as are come, to be gone as fast, as they can—the sooner the better.”

Not a man—one would say—to make Sunday ministrations pleasant for a modest sinner.

¹ Rev. Nathaniel Ward, b. about 1579; d. 1652. Came to New England 1634; about 1648 returned to England; became minister at Shenfield, in Essex, where he died. *The Cobbler of Agawam* first published in England, 1646–1647, under pen-name of *Theodore de la Guard*. Ward’s first American parish was at Agawam—now Ipswich.

THE
SIMPLE COBLER
OF
AGGAVVAMM in AMERICA.

WILLING
To help mend his Native Country, lamentably tattered, both in the upper-Leather
and sole, with all the honest fitches he can take.

And as willing never to bee paid for his work,
by Old English wonted pay.

It is his Trade to patch all the year long, gratis.

Therefore I pray Gentlemen keep your purses.

By *Theodore de la Guard.*

The Fourth Edition, with some Amendments.

*In rebus arduis ac tenni spe, fortissima
queque confilia tutissima sunt. Cic.*

In English,
When bootes and shooes are torn up to the lefts,
Coblers must thrust their awles up to the hefts.

This is no time to feare *Apelles gramm;*
Ne Sutor quidem ultra crepidam.

LONDON,
Printed by J. D. & R. I. for Stephen BOVILL, at the signe of the
Bible in Popes Head-Alley, 1647.

Title-page of "The Simple Cobler of Aggawam"!
From a copy in possession of the author

WARD ON MILLINERY

ner, under long sessions ; a veritable Calvinistic hustler, whose wit must have won more than his graces. And this clever, punning cobbler not only has his gibes for those going astray in matters of theologic concernment—he has his flings too at Women's Fashions :

“Loath [indeed] to pester better matter with such stuff, . . . but must ‘mispend a word or two upon their long-wasted, but short-skirted Patience.’ I truly confess it is beyond the ken of my understanding to conceive how those Women should have any true Grace . . . that have so little wit as to disfigure themselves with such exotic garbes, as not only dismantles their native lovely lustre, but transclouts them into gant-bar geese, ill-shapen shell-fish, Egyptian Hieroglyphics, French flurts of the pastery, which a proper English woman should scorne with her heels : It is no marvel they wear *drailes* on the hinder part of their heads, having nothing as it seems in the fore-part, but a few Squirrils brains to help them frisk from one ill-favored fashion to another.”

When one thinks, in this connection, of the pretty modest piquancies which belong to Boughton's well-authenticated pictures of the Pilgrim girls, he may well wonder into what wilderness a woman can go to be free of the gibes of the masculine anti-fashionists ! But

our minister of Agawam makes a personal application of his over-critical observance which is worth our noting. Having been a "solitary widow" there at Ipswich for almost twelve years, he says, "I had purposed lately to make a step over to my native country for a yoke-fellow," but considering with himself, "how the women there have tripe-wifed themselves with their cladments, I have no heart to the voyage, lest their nauseous shapes and the sea should work too sorely upon my stomach."

THE WINTHROPS

IN quick contrast with the saucy speech of the witty Doctor of Agawam, I am tempted to cite a racy fragment from the diary of that sedate and judicious Governor Winthrop,¹ whose picturesque Vandykean portrait is still hanging in the Senate Chamber at Boston, and whose observations, here quoted, must have been jotted down in those very years when Nathaniel Ward was blowing his strident horn.

¹ John Winthrop, b. 1588; d. 1649. Arrived in New England 1630; was Governor of Massachusetts Colony various years between 1630 and 1649. His *History of New England* (virtually his journal), 2 vols. 8vo, published 1825-1826; Life by R. C. Winthrop, 1864-1867, 2 vols. 8vo.

GOVERNOR WINTHROP

The lady of whom the good Governor makes mention must surely have possessed something more than “squirrel’s brains” :—

“Mr. Hopkins,¹ the Governor of Hartford,” he says—“came to Boston, and brought his wife with him (a godly young woman and of special parts), who has fallen into a sad infirmity, the loss of her understanding and reason, which had been growing upon her divers years, by occasion of her giving herself wholly to reading and writing, and had *written many books*. Her husband being very loving and tender of her, was loath to grieve her : but he saw his error when it was too late. For if she had attended her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds are stronger, etc., she had kept her wits and might have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God had set her.”

Those Puritan women—like most—seem to have provoked pinches from the male race whichever way they turned. Yet for all this,

¹ Edward Hopkins, Governor of Connecticut between 1640 and 1654—alternating with Governor Haynes. His name is kept fresh by his endowment of “Grammar” schools in Hartford, New Haven, and Hadley. The “many books” written by Mrs. Hopkins have passed out of remembrance.

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our good Governor was not without warm tendernesses woman-ward. Four times he was married—beginning at the lively age of eighteen; and of each successive wife there exist loving traces in his letters or diary.

The first—mother of the second Governor Winthrop—has embalmment in a delightful letter of leave-taking (1629); while the second, whose wifehood lasted only a year, has her memory consecrated by the husband's pathetic and poignant record of her last days and death. The third was the sharer of most of his fatigues and honors in America; "a woman," he says, "of singular virtue, prudence, modesty, and piety." She was practical too; and when "feeding her with letters" he writes, —lett me knowe what trimming I shall send for thy goune" (for which he has forwarded "Stuffe," by carrier), good Mistress Margaret replies—in a postscript—"When I see the cloth, I will send word what triminge will serve!"

The name of John Winthrop has large significance in Colonial History, whether the man be viewed as ruler or as writer. He migrated from the southern borders of Suffolk, which were rich in flocks and rich in woollen stuffs, and where the parishes of Linsey and of Kersey

GOVERNOR WINTHROP

still keep alive the memory of two great staples of the clothiers. He was backed by those who had money and power and came over ocean not as a poor pilgrim, but as a stout Puritan, who, though he loved and half-regretted the Mother Church, could—in a way—brave Laud, and rally a respectable fleet to bear him company on his voyage to New England. What wonder that his plantation at Salem, with the later tri-mountain one of Boston harbor, should have overshadowed and ultimately absorbed the weaker one of the Plymouth Pilgrims?

If not a sturdy King's man, he was no more a worshipper of "the many." He believed strongly and fightingly in the wisdom of the "lesser" number. Although he came to have faith in the dominant "Congregationalism" of Massachusetts, he always believed as strongly in Deacons and Parsons—with power. Still more strongly he believed in—Governors. On these lines he measured his high career—full of much combat and full of high resolve.

From his loins, too, sprang a line of men who proved ruling spirits. In his own day his oldest son, John, founded Saybrook and New London; the same son was the successful and

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esteemed Governor of the united New Haven and Connecticut Colonies for many years. He, too, was a man of scholarly tastes; made many visits to England; was Fellow of the Royal Society; was owner of the most notable private library in Massachusetts Colony, and was instrumental in securing that liberal Charter from Charles II. which the wily Governor Andros so much coveted, and which gave name at a later day to the famous episode of the Charter Oak.

Yet another John (called Fitz-John) Winthrop,¹ grandson of the first Governor, became in his time also Governor of Connecticut, where, at his hospitable house in New London, he held office for ten years; and upon the hill-pastures of Pequonnock and of Fisher's Island bred great flocks of sheep, thus reviving traditions of those agricultural successes which had belonged to the ancestral manor in Suffolk.

The first Governor Winthrop, although possessed of a great estate, lived many years in a

¹ Fitz-John Winthrop, b. at Ipswich, 1639; d. at Boston, 1707, Governor of Connecticut, 1698-1707—when he was succeeded by the Rev. Gurdon Saltonstall. Later distinguished members of the Winthrop family were John Winthrop, the scientist; and in our day Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, and the young author, Theodore Winthrop, who fell in battle, 1861.

BAY PSALM BOOK

modest house, which stood near the site of the historic “Old South Church,” and did not finally disappear until the early years of the Revolution. He counselled fellow-officials, too, against garish decoration, and over-love for showy and costly wainscotings; his authority and influence caught no added power from studied display or bumptious assertion. His claim also to literary consideration may rest safely—not upon any *éclat* of language, but upon a correspondence which always has a be-guiling naturalness, and to such sagacious presentation of civil duties as belong to his famous speech¹ setting forth the distinction between liberties which are unsafe except bounded by law, and liberties which are sacred, and to be defended at whatever cost.

EARLY PRINTING AND POETRY

IN the year 1639 the first printing-press in New England was set up at Cambridge, in the house of the President of the newly established Harvard College; and the first volume printed was the *Bay Psalm Book*. The poetry in the book

¹ Address to the General Court of Massachusetts in 1645. *History of New England*, ii., pp. 279 *et seq.*—John Winthrop.

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is as stiff as the price which the few available copies command in the present market. Choosing very much at random, two verses are cited from the Twenty-fourth Psalm:—

“1 The earth Jehovah’s is
And the fullnesse of it :
The habitable world, and they
That thereupon doe sit.

“2 Because upon the seas,
He hath it firmly lay’d ;
And it upon the water floods
Most solidly hath stay’d.”

I do not suppose that the rough-edgedness of this and of other such, hurt the psalmody with those who had the mission there to “be joyful in the Courts of the Lord;” an easy mellifluence would have smacked too strongly of the pretty devices of carnal-minded men to lead souls astray. And yet not a few of the bravest and soundest preachers clapped couplets into their sermons; and portentous rhymed elegies upon the death of eminent saints or ministers abounded; some showing exceptional ingenuity.

One of the most notable of these, written in honor of the Rev. John Cotton, by that Ben-

THE
VVHOLE
BOOKE OF PSALMES

Faithfully
TRANSLATED *into ENGLISH*
Metre.

Whereunto is prefixed a discourse de-
claring not only the lawfullnes, but also
the necessity of the heavenly Ordinance
of singing Scripture Psalmes in
the Churches of
God.

Coll. III.

Let the word of God dwell plenteously in
you, in all wisdome, teaching and exhort-
ing one another in Psalmes, Hymnes, and
spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with
grace in your hearts.

James v.

If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if
any be merry let him sing psalmes.

Imprinted

1640

Title-page of the "Bay Psalm Book"

BENJAMIN WOODBRIDGE

jamin Woodbridge ¹ whose name heads the list of the first graduates of Harvard College, has conceits in it which doubtless suggested to Benjamin Franklin his well-known printer's epitaph.

We cite a fragment :

“—So divinely beautified, you 'd count
He had been born and bred upon the *Mount!*
A living, breathing *Bible*; tables where
Both *covenants*, at large engraven were;
Gospel and Law in 's heart had each his column;
His head an index to the sacred volume;
His very name a *title-page*; and next,
His life a *commentary* on the text.
Oh, what a monument of glorious worth,
When, in a *new edition* he comes forth,
Without *erratas* may we think, he 'll be
In *leaves* and *covers* of Eternity!”

At the very time when the Cambridge Press was setting the *Bay Psalm Book* into columns —looking like verse, the clever and indefatigable Mistress Anne Bradstreet, of the famous Bradstreet home in Andover, was very likely

¹ This elegy is, by Allibone, wrongly ascribed to a younger Benjamin Woodbridge (nephew of the author), who had for much time a church in Medford, Mass., and who was born (1645) only seven years before the death of Cotton.

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furbishing up the varied, weighty, and ingenious poems which, some ten years later, were published in London as the product of the "Tenth Muse, lately appeared in New England."

She was of good stock, being eldest daughter of that brusque militant Governor Thomas Dudley, who had sometime crossed swords (of argument) with Winthrop, and who was of high descent and had given largest educational opportunities to Mistress Anne. The Rev. John Woodbridge—first of his name in America—had married another daughter of Governor Dudley, and being on a visit to England in 1647, when he served as chaplain to the Parliamentary Commissioners, in their parleys with the King—served as intermediary in looking after the publication of Mistress Bradstreet's poems; and to his brotherly tenderness, is, I daresay, due the somewhat immoderate, if not immodest claim for the young authoress to that place among the Muses, which appears upon the title-page.

Shall we test the flavor of this Tenth Muse,¹

¹ Anne (Dudley) Bradstreet, b. about 1612; d. 1672. Her husband, was Governor of Massachusetts, 1679-1686, and among her distinguished descendants may be counted the two Richard Danas, Wendell Phillips, and Dr. Oliver W. Holmes.

ANNE BRADSTREET

and as pleasant a one as can be found in her book?—

“I heard the merry grasshopper then sing—

The black-clad cricket bear a second part,
They kept one tune, and play'd on the same
string

Seeming to glory in their little art.

Shall creatures abject thus their voices raise?
And in their kind, resound their Maker's praise,
Whilst I, as mute, can warble forth no higher
lays.

“When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth (though old) still clad
in green,
The stones and trees, insensible of time,
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are
seen;
If winter come, and greenness then do fade,
A Spring returns, and they more youthful
made;
But man grows old, lies down, remains where
once he 's laid.”

I might go on thus from her best poem, of
“Contemplations,” but should hardly come to
better things, and might easily to worse.

One wishes she were more willing: yet there
is no gainsaying that she was clever; wonder-

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fully well instructed for those days; a keen and close observer; often dexterous in her verse—catching betimes upon epithets that are very picturesque: But—the Tenth Muse is too rash.

A WARM WRITER

MR. MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH—whom Mather describes as “a little, feeble shadow of a man,” was of a different poetic temper from Mistress Governor Bradstreet; and he put such a fiery scald of Calvinism upon his pages that I must show you some of the extraordinary blisters of it. Perhaps it may interest you further to know that this poet, though born in England, passed much of his school-day life in New Haven, where his father died in 1653.¹ The poem to which I specially call attention and which is widely known, even now, was called the *Day of Doom*, in which he pictures in lurid colors the final Judgment. In the course of it, the infants put in their piping little plea against being forever condemned for the sins of father Adam; and the Wigglesworth Judge replies:—

¹ Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, b. 1631; came to New England 1638; d. 1705. *Day of Doom*, published 1662. Some of his poems left in MS. now and then come to the light in historical collections.

The DAY of
DOOM ·
OR,
A Poetical Description
OF
The GREAT and LAST
Judgement.
WITH
A Short DISCOURSE about
Eternity.

By Michael Wigglesworth, Teacher of the
Church at Maldon in N. E.

*The Fifth Edition, enlarged with
Scripture and Marginal Notes.*

Acts 17. 31. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he
will Judge the world in Righteousness, by that Man whom
He hath Ordained. -----

Mat. 24. 30. And then shall appear the Sign of the Son of
Man in heaven, and then shall all the Tribes of the earth
Mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the
clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

BOSTON: Printed by B. Green, and J. Allen,
for Benjamin Eliot, at his Shop under the
West End of the Town-House. 1701.

*Title-page of "The Day of Doom"
From a copy at the Lenox Library*

THE DAY OF DOOM

“You sinners are, and such a share
As sinners may expect,
Such you shall have ; for I do save
None but my own elect.
Yet to compare your sin, with *their*
Who lived a longer time,
I do confess yours is much less
Thou’ ev’ry sin ’s a crime.
A crime it is, therefore in bliss
You may not hope to dwell :
But unto you, I shall allow
The easiest room in Hell !”

And thereafter the dreaded doom is pronounced by Master Wigglesworth. Infants and sinners all depart, and the poet proceeds :—

“They wring their hands, their caitiff hands,
And gnash their teeth for terrour ;
They cry, they roar, for anguish sore
And gnaw their tongues for horrour ;
But get away, without delay
Christ pities not your cry :
Depart to Hell ; there may you yell
And roar eternally.”

That poem had immense popularity and flashed its lurid colors about many a New England fireside. So many were the quickly recurring editions that Professor Tyler estimates

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that at least one out of every thirty-five of colonial readers must have purchased a copy. And the demand for it continued for a hundred years. Dr. Cotton declared that it would be read by multitudes in New England until the day of doom came. But literary exploitations of the Last Judgment are not so popular, so winning, or so tremendous, as in the days when such masterly "whips" as Drs. Cotton, Mather, and Shepherd held the theologic reins. Strange to think that this little, wilted rag of a man should have set aglow such pointed and piquant ballad-picturing of the eternal woes of the damned as would burden the deepest and most absorbing thought in thousands of New England families.

Meat out of the Eater was another well-known booklet by this writer, which so early as 1689 had come to its fourth edition. Upon its quaint title-page—of which we give a *facsimile*—may be seen the autograph of another worthy of these times, Nathaniel Clap, who put in type *The Lord's Voice Crying to the People*, and who for fifty years made his own voice heard in a pulpit of Newport. The good Bishop Berkeley was a great admirer of his, and declared that he had never seen a man of "more venerable" appearance.

N. Clap. Ps: C. Coll.

MEAT

OUT OF THE

EATER

OR

MEDITATIONS

Concerning

The Necessity, End, and Usefulness of

AFFLICTIONS

Unto GODS Children.

All tending to Prepare them *For*,
and Comfort them *Under* the
CROSS.

By Michael Wigglesworth.

The Fourth Edition.

BOSTON.

Printed by R. P. for John Usker. 1680.

Title-page of "Meat Out of the Eater"

WIGGLESWORTH

In contrast with the matter-of-fact signature of Mr. Clap we cannot forbear putting in evidence the humorsome, wriggling autograph of the author of the *Day of Doom*.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael Wigglesworth".

There are in Wigglesworth no great graces of expression, nothing to be called elegance; but there is a weighty terseness which is notable, and which here and there makes single words cut like a fiery dart; and more than all, there is commingling with the ballad-like jangling sound a concentrated, illuminating personal belief in his warnings, and in his seership which puts a heat into the words that blazes and scorches. The religious earnestness is kindred to that of Bunyan, and vitalizes his thought and his forecast. Withal there is from page to page a swift, sure flow of words, where no laggard thought could find cover.

SOME PREACHERS

A GREAT many of the lurid colors which belonged to this famous poem of "Doom" we should find flaring through many of the ser-

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mons of that day; but we cannot stay to talk individually of the great army of preachers, of whom, when all reservations are counted—New England may be so justly proud. There was Cotton—the ingenious—the discreet—the diplomatic, who came to be the Pope of Congregationalism in Boston; there was Shepherd—there was Hooker;¹ there were prigs among them; there always are such; men who delighted in their casuistry, because fine-spun; and in their pedagogy (like Mather of later date) because come at by infinite pains—but none the better for that. Withal, plenty of directness in them—utter, plain, strong speech, and noble dealing with fine, high truths (as they conceived them) which shine in their old theologic firmament, and will shine there with a fiery distinctness forever. I think it would be easy to pluck an hour-long sermon out of one of Mr. Hooker's discourses (averaging two hours), which even now, would hold an ordinary up-country New England congregation in

¹ Thomas Hooker, b. 1586; d. (Hartford, Conn.) 1647. *Vid.* Tyler, *American Literature*, vol. i., for an excellent characterization of the great preacher. Dr. Eggleston, in his recent *Beginners of a Nation* (Appleton, 1897), has given piquant glimpses of the qualities of Cotton; and a larger view—no less just—of the excellent and crotchety Roger Williams.

MR. HOOKER

most wakeful thrall; in such sort that at the end old men would nod approvingly to their neighbors and say—"Great sermonizer, Deacon!" and the old ladies nudge bonnets and declare emphatic approval of the "dear, good, earnest man, Mr. Hooker is!"

Yet he was a man who could make strong men listen and make strong men tremble too; a born leader; choleric at times, but as the excellent Mr. Whitfield of the old Guilford House said of him—he had his temper in hand—and controlled it like a mastiff in leash; "he could let out his dog, and pull in his dog as he pleased."¹

It would be interesting to know precisely what cross-country trails and mountain passes the great Mr. Hooker may have followed when he led his little company forth in 1636, from Newtown (Cambridge)—perhaps through Needham and Natick, perhaps by the wastes of Brookfield, or the picturesque valleys of Northern Woodstock, or by Warren and Ludlow, with Mount Tom rising frowningly on his right, to those benign meadows of Windsor and Hartford where he planted his church and people, and where his old parsonage lifted its weather-stained front in the eyes of many now

¹ Mather; *Magnalia*, Book III.

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living, and where his name and courage and sharp warnings will be always held in remembrance.

And now, finally, let us listen to one of his own "firstlies":

"The ignorant poor silly man pleadeth he cannot conceive it, that God hath created any man for to damn him; sure the Lord is more merciful than so. . . . I answer, it is true indeed God did never preserve men for this same end that he might damn them; though it is also true, he that made men, he will damn most of men in hell for their sins; 'Narrow is the gate and strait is the way;' . . . is this the argument of thy hope? Mark the folly, and observe the weakness of it. If creation be a good argument, then all the damned should come out of hell and be delivered. Nay, by this reason, the Devil himself should be saved; they are now in hell, they were created as well as you, poor ignorant silly creatures. Think of these things!"¹

One point I beg the reader to keep in mind, in this retrospect of ours—that up to this time many of the men of whom we have made mention—the Hookers, the Mortons, the Winthrops, the Cottons, the Bradstreets, the Bradfords, and the Wigglesworths—were English

¹ From *The Soul's Vacation*, 1638.

THE MAGNALIA

born—and most of them bred and schooled there; but when we come to such as Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards the case is different; these smack of the soil and are New Englanders indeed.

THE MAGNALIA

COTTON MATHER¹ had an American father—old Increase Mather of the Harvard College, who would have liked, perhaps, to keep a place warm there for his magniloquent and astonishing son. But the great Cotton Mather soared above colleges: and his ponderous sentences—lopsided with Latin, are a wonderment forever to the readers of the *Magnalia* or of whatever he wrote. He was indeed a most erudite man—as erudition was then measured—learning easily and always; caring less for accuracy than for quantity—assimilating crudest nuggets of knowledge and whipping all sorts of citations into his text—sometimes inapt—often vainglorious, but never with less between covers than would tax a wakeful and heavily freighted mind.

He thought excellently well of himself; and

¹Cotton Mather, b. (Boston) 1663; d. 1728. *Magnalia Christi Americana*, published in 1702, 4to, London. American edition, Hartford, 1820, 2 vols. 8vo.

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his rotund cheeks, ponderous wig, and prominent, flashing eyes (in his portrait) show it. He says himself, "I am able with little study to write in seven languages;" and he flirts the tag-rags of his classic endowment with the same bluster and vanity with which a South-Sea-Islander shakes his feathers. But I would not have you think for a moment that he never entered upon serious research, nor did good service in that line: indeed we go to him for a thousand things we want to know about the men and the Divine Providence of Colonial times; but we are never quite sure there is not some flaw in a date, or in the number, or the sex of a man's children. There seemed not very much of the severely Puritanic in him; too much pomp and bounce; perhaps too amiable, and too profuse of the eulogistic comments with which he wrapped the memory of his friends. There is a capital instance of his disposition to deal in hyperbole and inflated sentences in a letter he wrote to Sir Basil Dixwell —kinsman of John Dixwell who was buried behind the Centre church in New Haven— pleading with him for the son of the Regicide.

"From remote America," he writes, "there now waits upon you the only son of one who was

COTTON MATHER

an uncle and a father to yr honorable father. A word in which I perceive yr honor already sensible of a very moving and charming oratory. With an irresistible force, and a pathos beyond anything that we can see in the oration for *Ligarius*, it pleads for a most affectionate notice to be taken of him. Tho yr uncle be dead, yet *Non totus recessit reliquit enim filium*. Do but cast an eye on this his only son! Look upon him, Sir, his personal merit will speak for him. He is one of ingenuity. There is in him a modest, but yet a sprightly soul. . . . A little cultivation which the place of his nativity afforded him *not*, would have made him extraordinary.

“He comes not over because he is in any wants or straits; but Sir Basil is known in these parts of the world and well spoken of. He is esteemed a person of honor, figure, and virtue. ’T is believed it will shine in his goodness to his own kinsman. People of the best fashion here, have advised him to intermit his other business for half a year, and wait upon his kinsman and see. . . . And among those who have encouraged him, from an high opinion we have of your generosity, be pleased, Sir, to allow him to number himself, who is yr honor’s unknown, but real and humble servant, *Cotton Mather*.”

I believe the letter and visit did not prove effective. The story of a special providence

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shown to people aboard a New Haven sloop, whereof William Trowbridge was master, and which arrived October 16, 1697, is worth citing as a type of his *Wonderful Providences*.¹ The crew had been “seventeen weeks from Fayal,” and would have died of starvation: but were a praying and pious company and God sent his Dolphins to attend them.

“Of these they caught one every day, which was eno’ to serve ’em: only on Saturdays they still catch’d a Couple: and on the Lord’s day, they could catch none at all. With all possible skill and care they could not supply themselves with the fish in any other number or order; and indeed with an holy blush at last they left off trying to do anything on the Lord’s Days. . . . Thus the Lord kept feeding a company that put their trust in him, as he did *Israel* with his manna: and this they continued until the dolphin came to that change of water, where they wi’d to leave the vessels. Then, they so strangely surrendered themselves, that the Company took 27 of ’em; which no’ only suffic’d them until they came ashore, but also some of ’em were brought

¹ *A Faithful Record of many Illustrious Wonderful Providences*, etc., in eight chapters: not to be confounded with an earlier *Essay for Recording of Illustrious Providences*, by his father, Rev. Increase Mather. Boston, 1684.

COTTON MATHER

ashore *dry'd*, as a monument of the Divine Benignity."

It is a very queer jumble—that *Magnalia* of Cotton Mather;—tough, roundabout, scattery reading; flaming with fine crudenesses; enamelled with curious, outlandish citations; bristling with epithet and epigram; never graceful; rarely dignified; but bumptious—learned at times—explosive and loaded in good places—with heavy, spluttering, and wholly orthodox fire-works. Yet withal this Cotton Mather of the *Magnalia*—and of so many other books that the very naming of them would fill our pages—was a large man in almost all senses: blown by the moral tempests of his day into a firm belief in the witchcraft delusion, but questioning later in life, if, possibly,—in the hanging of those old ladies, their judges had not pushed the matter too far; stanch in his religion—as in his friendships; honest; incorruptible; and wearing all the bad swathings of his time with a sturdy uprightness that we must honor. Respect too, we must, his huge industries and his omnivorous grasp of all the knowledges then accessible; at the same time we must pity his bloat, his pomp, his aching self-consequence.

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DR. JONATHAN EDWARDS

How different a man was that cool, calm, serene Jonathan Edwards! Not piling heaps of knowledges together, but always—thinking.

What a boy he must have been! inconceivable! Doctor Edwards¹ playing checkers—blind-man's buff—puss-in-the-corner! Jonathan Edwards reading *Mother Goose* or *Robinson Crusoe*! The thing is incredible! The sedateness, the unction, the dignities of a whole corps of Puritan ancestry are centred in him; they bridged him over boyhood: he must have strode across the years of fun and pranks on the stilts of his forefathers. What a great calm and placidity that would seem proof against all ruffling, in the long, regular, benign, oval face which the cheapest engravings cannot distort from its serene likeness! Yet, if there was no boyish appetite for pranks, there was a rich feminine quality that put refining touches into his altitudes of reasoning, and which set its graces among the severities of his logic. No grossness, no

¹ Jonathan Edwards, b. at East Windsor, Conn., 1703; d. in Princeton, 1758. His *Freedom of the Will*, published 1754. Collected edition of works, 10 vols. 8vo, 1830; with Life by Sereno E. Dwight, D.D.

JONATHAN EDWARDS

dealing with foul metaphors, even when he dealt out damning thunders; and his inexorable Calvinism was—with all its harshness—high-savored; so that even the coals on which malefactors in Adam were put to the broil, had the cool purities of heaven blowing over them.

Born at Windsor, he came, when only thirteen, to Yale College, where he easily took first honors; and in a great sickness befalling him in those days, says—“it pleased God to shake me over the pit of hell.” The expression is like that of John Bunyan sixty years before. But he recovered—married a godly young woman of New Haven (Miss Pierpont), of a “wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence of mind.” It was of her—the story runs—that he was thinking when he wrote in his meditations of those years:—“The soul of a true Christian [appeareth to me] like such a little white flower as we see in the Spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the Sun’s glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrance; standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the

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light of the Sun." He did the usual penance of a good scholar, in being tutor at Yale. One of his reflections of that date is this:—"Came hither in order to entrance upon office of tutor. I have now abundant reasons to be convinced of the Troublesomeness and vexations of the world, and that it will never be another kind of world." An ugly college complication just about that epoch, was the going astray of Rector Cutler into the dreadfully wicked ways of Episcopacy.

After his Yale experience Jonathan Edwards was during twenty-four years preacher for the Church of Northampton; then dismissed, after a long, dreary wrangle on some matters of church regimen¹—very wearisome in the reading, very wearying to all concerned; driven out thus—as he was nearing fifty, with a large family, small means, poverty staring him in the face. Soon after dismissal, when his friends would have volunteered his services for

¹ He was forty-six when he left Northampton; and the precise grounds of quarrel were his insistence upon a stricter religious measurement of people's fitness for church membership than had been prevalent under the more liberal (not to say lax) rulings of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard. His Stockbridge invitation was not only to the Indian Mission, but to the pastorate of the small Congregational church flock of Stockbridge.

JONATHAN EDWARDS

an occasional sermon in the silent pulpit—the committee would none of him; and voted “it was not agreeable to their minds that Mr. Edwards should preach more among them.”

Finally he gets appointment through foreign influences to a mission amongst the Indians about Stockbridge—pinched there, too—hard beset for a comfortable homestead; his daughters sending their embroidery to Boston that its sale might go to swell the family purse. There is something very pathetic in the notion of this great, fine mind—the most metaphysical, the searchest of its day—the purest life too—driven out into that back-woods region to bandy phrases with young barbarians, and consult with Sir William Pepperell about turning the New England Primer into some Mohegan tongue. Looking back upon it now—upon the conditions, the contrasts—it does seem to those capable of any easy and fiery indignations, that the excellent people of Northampton should have felt humiliated in all their bones—for compelling the sacrifice. And yet I suppose those zealous church committee men, under the shadow of Mount Holyoke, regarded Jonathan Edwards as a sort of mild, religious abomination—very set in his ways (which was largely true). He was not affable either (when the

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heat of intense thinking was on him) ; dealing, socially, in short sentences (and not many of them) ; not sparing the rod in his household ; rigid with the Westminster Assembly's *Shorter Catechism* on every Saturday evening ; never allowing his boys out of doors after nine o'clock at night ; and if any suitor of his daughters tarried beyond that hour he was mildly, but peremptorily informed that it was "time to lock up the house." Among those suitors (and a successful one, I may say in parenthesis) was a Mr. Burr, who came to be President of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, and whose son, Aaron Burr—grandson of the Doctor—had, in later days, a way of staying out—after nine.

It was in the wilds of Stockbridge that Dr. Edwards wrote his treatise upon *Freedom of the Will*: it is not a popular book for a circulating library—nor yet one for the boudoir. But there are matters in it, and methods in it, and clear, sharp lines of fine close thinking, which will set it always among the books that men, learned or unlearned, must profoundly respect.

He was not an eloquent man in the popular sense ; least adapted, one would say, of all New England preachers to interest half-taught Indian children, or the hangers-on about a new

PRESIDENT EDWARDS

settlement. He was tall, spare in habit; not easy in movement, yet not lacking a homely grace; his sermons were written—written close and fine, even as they were thought out—so that in reading them, which he did with his left elbow leaning on the cushion of the pulpit, he had need to bring the manuscript close to his eye; gestures he had none; shifting now and then his pose from foot to foot, but with least possible action; his voice was thin but clear, and carrying emphasis and warrant into the passages where he had put soul; the discourse flowing on and on—precise, weighty, entralling with its ingenious mesh of argumentation; lucid as the sunlight; flashing, too, on occasions (as in his great sermon on the Final Judgment) into a vividness and a blazing earnestness which held his auditors painfully intent—as if in very truth the whole picture were real, and the Heavens were presently to open, and the Almighty Judge descend.

After the death of President Burr, of Princeton (1757), a message came into those wilds of Stockbridge asking Dr. Jonathan Edwards to come and fill the place of his deceased son-in-law: to his family—we may be sure is was a most gladsome message—as if out from the very courts of Heaven. Modest

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doubts, however, beset the Doctor; these, friends overcame, and he went—was inaugurated, and died in less than two months thereafter, without opportunity to try his energies where they might have counted best.

Thus—unfortunately too soon—went out that greatest metaphysic light of the Western world.

CHAPTER II

OUR last chapter dealt with times when the bold Captain Smith made espionage of New England shores, and explored the tobacco lands of Southern Virginia, where Jamestown, with its first American English Church, kept alive, and still keeps alive, the name of the pedant King James I. From the Cavalier settlers thereabout we swept up the coast to that ruder region where Delft pilgrims planted Plymouth under guidance of such sagacious leaders as Carver, Bradford, and Winslow; of whom the two last told stories of their experience—as did the venturesome and free-spoken John Smith. We had glimpses of Morton, who brought the jim-jams of London revelry to Wollaston Heights; and of that calm, wise-spoken John Winthrop, who transshipped moneys and family repute,—with Puritan pride and some prejudice,—out from the blighting influences of Laud and of Charles I., to plant a new Winthrop family, and a new

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state in New England: all which he did bravely and well. Nor did he ever cease to respect, though he could not wholly defend, that noble preacher of toleration whose name is kept in remembrance to-day—among those who do not read of *Bloody Tenents*—by the “Roger Williams Park,” of Providence. We dealt with that Puritan Swift (if the comparison be allowed) who made the fires of his satire crackle in the pulpit and the study of Agawam. We assisted at a lively roast of babes and others, in the verse of Mr. Wigglesworth; we lingered over the piled-up periods of Mather’s *Magnalia*—finding him a well-meaning, pompous Pope of Congregationalism. Under this changeful Colonial welkin came the gracious presence of Mistress Anne Bradstreet—trailing high ancestral memories from Lincolnshire—the child of a governor, and in due time the wife of another governor—loving bright things and bringing with her the twittering of the birds—but not their music. Last came the serene Dr. Jonathan Edwards, pinched in all the low things of life—the bickerings with his deacons, and material necessities—but living ever among the high things, and carrying his serenities with him past the middle of the eighteenth century.

ON THE JAMES

Is it not wonderful that such a man should have been moved by his conscience to preach in this strain :

“When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it! When they shall see how miserable others of their fellow-creatures are, who were naturally in the same circumstances with themselves; when they shall see the smoke of their torment and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear the dolourous shrieks and cries, and consider that they in the meantime are in the most blissful state, and shall surely be in it to all eternity: how they will rejoice!”¹

Tearing ourselves away from the glare of such pulpit effulgence we take up other trails through the lands by the Chesapeake.

ON THE JAMES

SOMETHING like half-way between Norfolk and the city of Richmond, in the midst of those tobacco-growing fields which made so many

¹ Sermon; *End of the Wicked contemplated by the Righteous*, copy from *American Literature* (Stedman & Hutchinson), vol. ii., p. 397.

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early colonists rich, and not far from places whose names have been blazed upon the memory of later Americans by the red lights of war—(such as Bermuda Hundred, City Point, Malvern Hill)—there still stands the great, home-like, brick mansion of Westover. A large estate once attached to the homestead, its lands reaching to the present city of Richmond. William Byrd, receiver-general of his Majesty's revenues (in Charles II.'s time) lived there; his son William was born there in 1674, and after education in England, and sharing in the traditions of the Middle Temple, he returned to Virginia, succeeded to his father's honors, added largely to the Westover holdings, lived in great luxury, and accumulated the most considerable library in the Southern Colonies. He was witty, keen in business, loved books, horses, fine dinners, and poetry; must have seen Dryden in his latter days, and came from England when the battle of the Boyne was a fresh memory, and William and Mary—who gave their names to the new Virginia College at Williamsburg—were fairly in their royal places.

The *Byrd MSS.*¹ are an inheritance from this cheery, audacious, dinner-loving Virginian, whose Westover portrait shows him to

¹ Printed partially 1841; fuller edition, 1866.

WESTOVER

have been an elegant gentleman—the ideal Cavalier—tall, erect, and with such full-bottomed wig as Steele might have worn; and he wore it with as much grace as Steele. I give a taste of his manner with the pen from an account of his visit to what he calls “the Enchanted Castle” of Colonel Spotswood—another Virginia Cavalier of much consequence, who had been Governor¹ of the Colony, and who was largely devoted to iron-mining and iron-working.

“I arrived about three o’clock, and found only Mrs. Spotswood at home, who received her old acquaintance with many a gracious smile. I was carried into a room elegantly set off with pier-glasses, the largest of which came soon after to an odd misfortune. Amongst other favorite animals that cheered this lady’s solitude, a brace of tame deer ran familiarly about the house, and one of them came to stare at me as a stranger. But unluckily spying his own figure in the glass, he made a spring over the tea-table that stood under it, and shattered the glass to pieces, and falling back upon the tea-table made a terrible fracas among the china.

“But ’t was worth all the damage to show the

¹ Alexander Spotswood; b. (in Africa) 1676; d. 1740. Governor (under Orkney) 1710; displaced in 1722 by Sir Hugh Drysdale (time of George I.).

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moderation and good-humor with which she bore this disaster. . . . We all kept snug in our several apartments till nine except Miss Theky [sister of the hostess] who was the housewife of the family. At that hour we met over a pot of coffee, which was not quite strong enough to give us the palsy. After breakfast the Colonel and I left the ladies to their domestic affairs, and took a turn in the garden, which has nothing beautiful but three terrace walks that fall in slopes one below another. I let him understand that beside the pleasure of paying him a visit, I came to be instructed by so great a master in the mystery of making of iron, wherein he had led the way, and was the Tubal Cain of Virginia. He corrected me a little there, by assuring me he was not only the first in this country, but the first in North America, who had erected a regular furnace. They ran altogether upon bloomeries in New England and Pennsylvania, till his example had made them attempt greater works. . . .

“The afternoon was devoted to the ladies, who showed me one of their most beautiful walks.

“They conducted me through a shady lane to the landing, and by the way made me drink some very fine water that issued from a marble fountain and ran incessantly. Just behind it was a covered bench, where Miss Theky often sat and bewailed her virginity. Then we proceeded to the river, which is the south branch of Rappa-

COLONEL SPOTSWOOD

hannock, about fifty yards wide, and so rapid that the ferryboat is drawn over by a chain, and therefore called the Rapidan. At night we drank prosperity to all the Colonel's projects in a bowl of rack punch, and then retired to our devotions."

What a rare contrast this little glimpse offers to the manner of such diarists as Governor Winthrop and Nathaniel Ward! and what a gracious and mincing step Colonel Byrd must have put into his pirouettes with the blushing Miss Theky!

OTHER SOUTHRONS

COLONEL SPOTSWOOD,¹ at his death in 1740, was buried in the garden of his country house, "Temple Farm" (afterward called the "Moore House"), and it was in this dwelling at Temple Farm that—at a later day—Lord Cornwallis signed the capitulation which virtually put an end to the wars of the American Revolution.²

After our pleasant introduction to the Spotswood household it may interest the curious reader to know that Lady Spotswood—three

¹ His *Official Letters* were published in the Collections of the Virginia Historical Society in 1882, and his portrait is in the Virginia State Library.

² Vid. Bishop Meade's *Old Churches of Virginia*, and Campbell's *History of Virginia*, p. 407.

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years after the Colonel's death—married an Irish incumbent of the rectory of St. Mark's parish, Culpeper County—being, perhaps, won thereto in no small degree by a letter of the enamoured rector (rescued from oblivion in the historico-ecclesiastical records of Rev. Philip Slaughter) in which he combats her timid representation—"that marriage with a clergyman would expose her to censure"—maintaining that intermarriage with one holding place in the high service of the "Lord of Lords" would add to her dignity nor "draw the censure of the world. And therefore, dear madame," he continues, "your argument being refuted you can no longer consistently refuse to consummate my happiness." She did not.

A sprightly writer of those times on the *Present State of Virginia* was Robert Beverly,¹ a man of fortune, born in the Chesapeake region, but taking his European university polish—which the rich James River tobacco-lands made easy—and setting forth racily in his book the hospitalities of Virginians. He says with pride that "a stranger has no more to do but to inquire upon the road where any gen-

¹ Robert Beverly, b. about 1675; d. 1716. His History, published 1705 and 1709, was translated into French, and issued with many curious illustrations by Gribelin.

HUGH JONES

tleman or good housekeeper lives." He was not without his prejudices, however, and slashes with immoderate rancor that Colonial Governor Nicholson, who had moved the capital from Jamestown to Williamsburg; and who, as our pleasant author alleges, "practises the detestable politics of governing by parties."

A more mildly spoken sketcher of the habits and customs of early Virginians was the Rev. Hugh Jones,¹ who had come over from England (1696) and who is loud in his praises of the Colonial conditions of life; the country to him "exceeds all others in goodness of climate," and even the bite of a rattlesnake "is found not to be mortal, if remedies can be applied in time." He was a stanch churchman, and his leanings thereto are unmistakable.

"If New England (he says) be called a receptacle of Dissenters, and New York an Amsterdam of religion, Pennsylvania the nursery of Quakers, Maryland the retirement of Roman Catholics, North Carolina the refuge of runaways, and South Carolina the delight of buccaneers, Virginia may be justly esteemed the happy retreat of true Britons, and true Churchmen for the most part."

¹ *The Present State of Virginia.* 8vo. London: 1724.

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Our pleasant optimist taught mathematics in the venerable William and Mary College, supplying also many educational text-books. This old college (second in age of all American colleges), where this mathematical churchman deployed his resources, had great reputation in its day. Jefferson and Monroe were both graduates; and the eminent Chief-Justice Marshall was, for a time, a student there. But the scathing touch of wars has fallen upon its offices and upon the rich lands which once fed its treasury; a lusty modern normal school—with its collegiate curriculum—is however now growing from out the débris of the royal institution, where, in days gone (1769) the Baron Botetourt, one of the last of Colonial Governors, drove in a state coach, drawn by six milk-white horses—the gift of George III. A mutilated statue of the same royal Governor still draws curious ones to the shades of the quiet campus.

We shift the scene now from the home of brave cavaliers, fine equipages, and steaming dinners to quieter scenes by the road-sides of New England.

MADAME SARAH KNIGHT

NORTHERN WAY-SIDE

IN 1704 a certain Madame Knight,¹ a strong-minded school-teacher of Boston—said at one time to have had young Benjamin Franklin as a pupil—and who had a special reputation for instructing in the “art of composition,” made a horseback journey, quite by herself (saving an occasional guide), from Boston to New York. Her route was by the Shore Line—as we should say—passing through Providence, New London, Guilford, and New Haven; and in a brief journal of the trip which has been printed, she jots down a great many of the droll happenings by the way, and gives little echoes of the coarse talk of workpeople, which is hard to find elsewhere recorded. Thus, a rough farming man of the country is the pilot into the vastnesses of New London, and is mounted upon a hard-trotting mare, with his daughter Jemima seated behind him, with only a bag for a pillion.

¹ Mme. Sarah (Kemble) Knight, b. in Boston, 1666; d. 1727. Her father, Captain Thomas Kemble, a merchant of Charlestown, Mass., was, in 1673, sentenced to stand for two hours in the stocks for “lewd and unseemly conduct” in saluting his wife at the doorstep on the Sabbath-day, after a three-years’ absence.—Miss Perkins’s *Old Houses of Norwich*, p. 300.

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“After many a hearty and bitter ‘O!’ Jemima at length lowed out—‘Lawful heart! Father, this mare hurts me dingerly: I’m direful sore, I vow!’ ‘Poor child,’ says Gaffer—‘she used to serve your mother so.’ ‘I don’t care how mother used to do,’ quoth Jemima: At which the old man laughed and kicked his jade o’ the side which made her jolt three times harder.”

I do not know where in contemporary record (1704) is caught in so realistic a way the very “twang” of the country-side folk. At New London Madame Knight is received and courteously entertained by that model gentleman, Rev. Mr. Saltonstall, who was only four years after made Governor of Connecticut; and I am sorry that this mistress of the art of composition has not given us some pictures of Minister Saltonstall’s home life. He had a large flock of children and used to marshal them in procession to march from his garden-gate to the church.¹ Madame Knight appears, however, to have reserved her art for little thumbnail sketches of odd bumpkins—on the road. At New Haven she seems much impressed by a shopping scene. The customer, a tall fellow with his pouch full of tobacco—“for they seldom lose their cud”—goes to a merchant’s

¹ Miss Caulkins’s *History of New London*.

MADAME SARAH KNIGHT

house, squares himself before the dealer, and blurts out—"Have you any ribbinen for hatbands to sell?" These being shown, Bumpkin cries, "'It 's confounded gay, I vow;' and beckoning to the door, in comes Joan Tawdry, dropping about fifty courtesies and stands by him; he shows her the ribbon. 'Law you,' says she, 'its right *gent*, do you take it, 'tis dreadful pretty.'" And so the bargain is closed: and Madame remarks philosophically—

"We may observe here the great necessity and benefit both of education and conversation; for these people have as large a portion of mother wit, and sometimes a larger, than those who have been brought up in cities; but for want of improvements, render themselves almost ridiculous —as above."

Of the inhabitants generally she says—"they are governed by much the same laws as we in Boston, and many of them are good sociable people, and I *hope* religious too; but a little too much independent in their principles." Nor can I forbear copying a further paragraph or two which will show with what a fine complacency a Boston woman of that day could speak of the interiors and minor morals of a rival town.

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“The city of New York is a pleasant, well-compacted place, situated on a commodious river which is a fine harbor for shipping. The buildings, brick generally, very stately and high, though not altogether like ours in Boston. The bricks in some of the houses are of divers colors and laid in checkers, being glazed looked very agreeable. The insides of them are neat to admiration; the wooden work, for only the walls are plastered, and the summers [timbers] and joists are plained, and kept very white scoured. The fire-places have no jambs (as ours have), but the backs run flush with the walls, and the hearth is of tiles and is as far out into the room at the ends as before the fire. . . .

“They are generally of the Church of England and have a New England gentleman for their minister, and a very fine church set out with all customary requisites. . . . They are not strict in keeping the Sabbath, as in Boston and other places where I had been, but seem to deal with great exactness, as far as I see or deal with. They are sociable one to another, and courteous and civil to strangers, and fare well in their houses. . . . Their diversion in winter is riding sleighs about three or four miles out of town, where they have houses of entertainment at a place called the Bowery. . . . Mr. Burroughs carried his spouse and daughter and myself out to one Madame Dowes, a gentlewoman that lived

OLD POSTAL ROUTES

at a farm-house, who gave us a handsome entertainment of five or six dishes and choice beer, and metheglin, cider, etc., all which, she said, was the produce of her farm."

It appears that the good lady was bound upon some business errand, which she succeeded in pushing through by the mediation of that "holy good gentleman, Rev. James Pierpont." On her return she crossed the river (Quinnipiac) upon the ice; "Madame Prout and Cousin Trowbridge," coming to see her off for New London, where she was again entertained by Mr. Saltonstall; and "by commands of Hon. Governor Winthrop" stays to take supper with him. After four or five days more of rough travel, with some curious and perilous adventures, she reaches Boston, to her great joy; and "desires to adore [her] Great Benefactor for thus graciously carrying forth and returning in safety his unworthy handmaid."

This lady's "hazzardos" journey seems to have followed very nearly the old trail of post-riders—through the Narragansett country where "Trees and bushes gave very unpleasant welcomes with their branches," and over no less than four or five ferries and dangerous

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fords. It would seem that the post-riders in Madame Knight's time put some six days to the journey between Boston and New York¹—setting off every Monday morning from either place, and exchanging "bags" at Saybrook for the return. Some years later—owing to delays "at Ferries and by Storm-tides"—a through route was made *via* Hartford. But the old "stage-lines"—familiar to our grandfathers—only began to coil over the Connecticut hills at a much later day (Jesse Brawn's stage-line, *via* Norwich,² dating from 1793). It was in times when these and the flanking taverns on the heights were in "apple-pie order" that the wary innkeepers brought out their ponderous spy-glasses to reconnoitre the lagging coaches and put their rashers to broil.

Poor Madame Knight was subject of no such friendly *reconnaissance*, but she became later a householder in the town of Norwich, where she left a reputation for great astuteness and business faculty—afterward planting herself in a country-house near to Uncasville, a short distance above New London on the river Thames, in which neighborhood she died and was buried.

¹ Palfrey's *New England*, vol. iv., p. 327. See also Atwater's *New Haven*, p. 373.

² Miss Perkins, *Old Houses of Norwich*.

SEWALL DIARY

CHIEF-JUSTICE SEWALL

THE most important Diary relating to private life in New England, in the early part of the eighteenth century, and worthy to be compared—for its honesties and self-exposure—with the most valued English Pepysian gossip, is that of Judge Sewall.¹ He was a typical, well-placed, rich, well-bred New Englander—stout, full-cheeked—loving his dinners, giving frequent smack of turkey-pies and of good cider in his barrel; kindly withal; a man who would stop in his walk to pat a well-looking boy upon the head with words of commendation; a lover of justice; a vigorous opponent of negro slavery from the beginning; never ceasing to regret his early judicial support of the “Witch” persecutions, and doing public penance for the same, bare-headed, upon a frigid day, year after year; universally respected for his probity and his generosities.

His Diary was not intended for publication—as to this the reader will presently agree; indeed there are passages in it that one would think might make the good judge lie uneasily

¹ Samuel Sewall, b. (in England) 1652; d. 1730. He arrived in Boston 1661; published many pamphlets, but is chiefly known by his *Diary*, issued by the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1878-82.

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in his grave. I begin with an entry of July 25, 1700:

“Went to the funeral of Mrs. Sprague, being invited by a good pair of gloves.

“Thursday, June 10, 1701. Having last night heard that Josiah Willard had cut off his hair (a very full head of hair) and put on a Wigg, I went to him this morning. . . . inquired of him what extremity had forced him to put off his own hair, and put on a Wigg? He answered—none at all. But said that his hair was straight, and that it parted behind—seemed to argue that men might as well shave their hair off their head, as off their face. I answered—Men were men before they had hair on their faces. God seems to have ordained our Hair as a Test, to see whether we can bring our minds to be content to be at his finding. . . . Pray^d him to read the tenth Chapter of Calvin’s Institutes. He seem^d to say he would leave off his Wigg when his hair was grown to cover his ears.

“Oct. 20, 1701. Mr. Cotton Mather came to Mr. Wilkins shop, and there talk^d very sharply ag^t me as if I had used his father worse than a neeger. Spake so loud, that people in the street might hear him. . . . I had read in the morning Mr. Dod’s saying: ‘Sanctified afflictions are good Promotions.’ I found it was a cordial.

“Nov. 30, 1701. I spent this Sabbath at Mr.

SEWALL DIARY

Coleman's—partly out of dislike to Mr. Josiah Willard's cutting off his hair; . . . Mr. Coleman's people were much gratified at my giving them my company; several considerable persons expressed themselves so. The Lord cleanse me from all my iniquity!" [Somewhere in 1718 (being a widower) he is attentive to a Mistress Denison.] On "7th Nov. asked her what I sh'd allow her? She not speaking, I told her I was willing to give her Two and Fifty Pounds per annum during her life, if it should please God to take me out of the world before her. She answer'd, she had better keep as she was, than give a certainty for an uncertainty. . . . I desired her to make proposals; but she made none. I *had* thoughts of Publishment next Thursday; but I now seem to be far from it. May God who has the Pity of a Father, Direct and help me. [At a somewhat later visit he reports] . . . said she thought 't was hard to part with *all*, and have nothing to bestow on her kindred. I said, I did not intend anything of the *movables*; I intended all the personal Estate to be to her. She said I seem'd to be in a hurry, was the reason she gave me no proposals. . . . Ask'd me if I would drink; I told her Yes: she gave me Cider, apples, and a glass of Wine—gather'd together the little things I had given her and offered them to me: but I would take none of them . . . she thank'd me, and desired my prayers. Mr. Stoddard and his

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wife came in, which broke off my visit. I dismissed my coach, and came home by moonshine!
Laus Deo."

[In the August following it is a Mistress Tilley whom he is visiting for the second time:] "Find she was 20 when she married Mr. Woodman. . . . Visit Mistress Tilley. . . . Ask her to come and dwell at my house. She expresses her unworthiness. . . . I tell her I am going to Bristol and would have her consider." [On his return, September 16th is this entry:] "After meeting, visited Mrs. Tilley, Sept. 18, ditto, ditto. Sept. 21. Gave Mrs. Tilley a little Booke, entitled 'Ornaments for the daughters of Zion.' Sept. 23 and 24, eat almonds and raisins with Mrs. Tilley. Sept. 25, visited Mrs. Pemberton who applauded my courting Mrs. Tilley: discoursed with Mr. Cutler, president of Yale College; visited Mrs. Tilley, and when I came home, they told me Mr. Stoddard had invited me to eat salt-fish with him." [Finally, on October 29th,] "Thanksgiving day, went to Mrs. Tilley's, and was married in the best room below stairs. Sung the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses of the 90th psalm. Cousin Sam. Sewall pitched Low Dutch tunes in a very good key, which made the singing very agreeable."

This was at Thanksgiving of 1719. In May 31, 1720, is this pathetic entry—"Buried my

SEWALL DIARY

dear wife!" In the October following, however, after a lapse of four months only—his Diary runs—

"I went to Mme. Winthrop's at 3. Spake to her saying, my loving wife died so soon and suddenly, 't was hardly convenient for me to think of marrying again: however I came to this Resolution, that I would not make my court to any person without first consulting with her. Had a pleasant discourse about seven single persons sitting on the fore seat [of the meeting house]. She propounded one and another."

It comes out, however, after a few visits, that the Widow Winthrop is on his mind very fixedly: but Mme. Winthrop is not an easy conquest; the pursuit enters rascily into the Diary. Sometimes the lady not being in, he gives Katy (her little granddaughter) a penny or a kiss. Again, when Mme. W. was not within—

"I gave Sara Chickering the maid 2s; Juno, who bro't in wood, 1s: afterward the nurse came in: I gave her 18d, having no other small bill."

On a certain 11th October, being in poetic mood, he writes to her—

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“I pray God to keep you and give you a joyful entrance upon the two hundred and twenty-ninth year of Christopher Columbus—his discovery.”

He tells her the reason why he came every other night was lest he should drink too deep draughts of pleasure. But on the next day the look-out is ominous.

“I told my son and daughter Sewall, that the weather was not so fair, as I had apprehended.” [Four days later,] “She was courteous to me, but took occasion to speak pretty earnestly about my keeping a coach; I said 't would cost £100 *per annum*, she said 't would cost but £40.”

Just about the same disparity, the reader will observe, which prevails nowadays between a husband's and a wife's estimate of outside expenses. On one of his dubious days he encounters little David Jeffries, grandson of Mme. Winthrop, who saw him, and looked very lovingly; “ask'd me if I was going to see his Grandma? I gave him a penny.” Upon which, 'tis to be suspected, little David Jeffries ran off—with his thumb to his nose (if they had that gesture in those times) and twirling his little Puritan fingers.

“I told her that being encouraged by little David Jeffries loving eyes and sweet words, I

SEWALL DIARY

was come to enquire whether she could find in her heart to leave that house and neighborhood and go and dwell with me at South End? I *think* she said softly *not yet*. At going, she gave me a dram of Black Cherry brandy, and a lump of Sugar that was in it." [But on another occasion, alas,] "I rose at eleven to come away, saying I would put on my coat. She offered not to help me: I pray'd her that Juno might light me home: She opened a shutter and said 't was pretty light abroad. . . . So I came home by star-light. *Jehovah Jireh!*"

This invocation—in such a connection—sounds a little wickedly in good Judge Sewall! and shall close our budget of extracts. But what a debt we owe to him in thus opening the doors—one might even say—the back-doors, upon those old Boston homesteads! Whether there may not have been some cruelty on the part of the historic delvers in thus opening to the public gaze the minor morals and domestic sanctities of the childlike jurist, we doubt; it seems somewhat like giving over the remains of a cherished friend for dissection, and for study of special morbid tendencies. But whatever the decision on this point, there can be no doubt that the honest Judge having put his hand to the task of personal unveiled, did it

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

with an unblinking conscience. How many of our great modern oracles could stand a like exposure?

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

IT is barely possible that Benjamin Franklin ¹ may have been in extreme childhood a pupil of that Madame Knight, of whose horseback ride, and her report of the same mention has been made.² If this be true, she must have had him in charge for a very short time; certainly he came very early to a better understanding of the art of Composition than she could ever have taught him. In fact, with his Addison, and his Bunyan, and his Defoe as masters, he taught himself—as every good, pungent, characteristic writer does and should. Rules of grammar and of rhetoric, however showered upon the brain, and driven in, will not make one a good writer. A man cannot mount and master a horse well by studying his anatomy; he must ride and ride again, and keep riding

¹ Benjamin Franklin, b. 1706; d. 1790. Sparks' *Works*, etc., of Franklin, 1840-50. Bigelow's *Autobiography and Life*, 3 vols., 1868.

² Madame Knight's return to Boston was in 1704; she is supposed to have continued her school-keeping in Boston till 1714 or thereabouts, at which date Franklin would have been a boy of seven.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

—all the better if he has a siege of it—bare-backed.

It is quite certain that Benjamin Franklin had a genius for *putting* things which made him almost independent of schools; but his faithfulness in study of the *Spectator* people and of their method of turning sentences, is most marked, even in his earliest attempts; and in strong, pointed expressions, deployed with the utmost simplicity, and with a comparatively limited vocabulary, he came to be a match for the best writers of the Queen Anne period. Of course there were sweetneses and graces about Steele and his fellows, and there are sword-thrusts of a bitter and prevailing Logic in Swift, which were out of and beyond the range of the *Poor Richard* philosopher: but in clearness, in precision of statement, in capacity to clean his current writing of all useless words, he was, I think, about the first among Americans to prove himself a master of art in language.

You all know, or ought to know, that charming Autobiography of his—at least the first portion of it—written at a heat as it were; the second, composed (I use the word purposely) after an interval of many years, lacks the spontaneity and glow and good work of the earlier

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

part. By means of this the youthful career of the philosopher Benjamin Franklin has become part of the common knowledge of every American: we know about his inglorious work in the tallow-chandlery, and at the cutlery; about his turn to printing—about his quarrel with an imperious brother, his running away, his sloop voyage to New York, his drift to Philadelphia, his munching of a twopenny roll in the streets of a city where he was to become within thirty years the most important citizen. There was an interlude of London experience in his printing business indeed; but wherever he went, his shrewdness, his aptitude, his untiring industries, his assurance, caught the attention of discerning patrons and made his progress sure.

It was in the year 1732, when he was twenty-six, and married, with a printing-press of his own, and a newspaper, a shop—where he sold stationery, feathers, cheese, and where cash was paid for rags—that the *Poor Richard* Almanac had its first issue. It was professedly (for Franklin always loved the cover of another name in his pen-work) by Dr. Richard Saunders, who says in the first little preface:—

“COURTEOUS READER:—I might attempt in this place to gain thy favor by declaring that I write

Poor Richard, 1733.

A N

Almanack

For the Year of Christ

1733,

Being the First after LEAP YEAR:

<i>And makes since the Creation</i>	<i>Years</i>
By the Account of the Egyptian Greeks	7241
By the Latin Church, when Oct. 1 st	6932
By the Computation of <i>WW</i>	5742
By the Roman Chronology	5682
By the Jewish Rabbies	5494

Wherein is contained

The Lunations, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aspects, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Fairs, Courts, and observable Days.

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London, but may without sensible Error serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newfoundland to South-Carolina.

By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and sold by B. FRANKLIN, at the New
Printing Office near the Market

The Third Impression.

Title-page of Poor Richard's Almanac

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC

Almanacs with no other view than that of the public good, but in this I should not be sincere. . . . The plain truth of the matter is, I am excessive poor, and my wife, good woman, is, I tell her, excessive proud: she cannot bear, she says to sit spinning in her shift of tow, while I do nothing but gaze at the stars; and has threatened more than once to burn all my books and rattling traps (as she calls my instruments) if I do not make some profitable use of them for the good of my family. The printer has offered me some considerable share of the profits, and I have thus begun to comply with my dame's desire."

In the issue of the following year poor Richard Saunders returns thanks:

"My poor wife," he says, "has been enabled to get a pot of her own, and is no longer obliged to borrow one from a neighbor; nor have we ever since been without something of our own to put in it. She has also got a pair of shoes and a new warm petticoat; and for my part, I have bought a 2nd-hand coat, so good that I am not now ashamed to go to town or be seen there."

Henceforth Poor Richard was a familiar acquaintance of all reading Americans, and came to be known over England and nearly the whole continent of Europe.

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

And what gave it such vogue? First, I suppose, the enkindling of sympathy, by creating personal interest in the maker of the Almanac; and then the happy, trenchant, interlarding of the text with bits of practical wisdom: "Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee." "Fools make feasts and wise men eat them." "If you would have y'r business done—go; if not, send." "Early to bed and early to rise, will make a man healthy and wealthy and wise." "One to-day is worth two to-morrows."

"He that by the plow would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive."

"Those have a short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter."

And thus for a quarter of a century or more Poor Richard preached his little line-long sermons, year after year; sermons from very old texts, many of them—waifs of common knowledge or tradition—Biblical many of them and as old as Solomon, but given a new twang by quaint or sharp wording, which set them upon new and wider flight. Let us not speak reproachfully of the stealing; 't is a good sort of stealing, like Chaucer's in his *Canterbury Tales*; whoever can put new force and new beauty into an old truth by his method of re-stating it, is

POOR RICHARD

doing good work—doing indeed what most of the good sermonizers are bent upon. No matter what old metal you may use, if you can put enough of your own powder behind it 't will reach the mark.

All through his life Benjamin Franklin showed wisdom in pouncing upon those every-day practical truths, and in bringing them to the front in such order and seemliness as to win. I say seemly—which is true for the most part; and yet there are smudgy trails in many of Franklin's writings, as of one in whom the taste of *Peregrine Pickle* and *Tom Jones* is still fresh in the mouth. This is more marked in some things he wrote when he came to know Paris in the baddish days that went before the great Revolution; for he missed but little of being a witness of those scenes which belonged to the sacking of the Bastille. I cannot follow the changes and the progresses (in little as well as great things) by which he came to be a man of wealth for those days, a man of large scientific repute, a representative of Colonial interests in the courts of England and of France. But what a marvellous change for the printer's boy—to roll in his coach through Paris streets—to meet with cheers from those street people, who had known him as Poor

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

Richard, but now as the august representative of the liberties of a new nation, and a man courted by the great ladies who sunned themselves on the terraces at Versailles!

Mrs. John Adams, who breakfasted with him in his house at Passy, gives rather a rude picture of the Madame Helvetius, who was a party to that little Franklin *fête*. Yet who can trust one great dame to treat fairly another whom she meets for the first time, and who ranks her at the table of the host? I suppose very likely Madame Helvetius intensified her coquettices and familiarities, for the sake of wounding the self-love of the New England lady; all the more since she knew that Franklin and John Adams had their rather unamiable sparrings.

But Franklin was never a man of nice delicacies—of thought or action; he had never a bringing-up at the impressionable age, among ladies of dignity and refinement. He lacked appreciation in that direction; lacked too, perhaps, a large and fine moral sense. He was the first American to win wide Continental repute as thinker and writer and worker: a repute he still most worthily holds. He was full of all practical wisdom—far-sighted—an intense lover of liberty—a scorner of shams—

THOMAS PAINE

trenchant—strong; a man to get the most out of the bargain of Life—and to go through the world rich and smiling and triumphant.

THOMAS PAINE

AMONG those whom Franklin befriended once on a time in London, and advised to come to America, was Thomas Paine¹—an English radical, full of liberty-loving of all sorts—and wonderfully clever; with rare art in making old truths bristle; who poured out epigrams in showers; and had a special gift at arguing. His tractate of *Common Sense*, a Revolutionary paper, was said to have been worth to the American cause an army of twenty thousand men; it sold by hundreds of thousands; and for this and kindred services he was voted thanks and stipends: Congress gave him \$3,000, and New York a considerable estate at New Rochelle. After service in America and winning honors, he went to France; he sat in the Convention which condemned Louis XVI.—and thereafter wrought so testily in French affairs as to be arrested, and only escaped the

¹ Thomas Paine, b. 1737; d. 1809. Came to America 1774. *Common Sense*, 1776. *Rights of Man*, 1791-92. *Age of Reason*, 1794-96. *Works and Life*, by Moncure D. Conway, 1892.

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guillotine under Robespierre by a wrong chalk-mark on the door of his cell. It would have been a better ending for him if he had gone down in that maelstrom.

When we consider the dignity, the elevation, and the reasonableness of so much that he says in his argument for the separation of the Colonies from England, and of many passages even in the *Age of Reason*, one hardly knows how to account for the ribaldry which belongs to so many of his later writings: ribald about old friends and benefactors; ribald about religion; ribald about the public which had honored him. Jealous, morbid, crazed by his vanities—his clever mind at intervals blazing through the clouds and foulnesses which his own dissipations and selfish arrogance had created; dying at last, after long stages of drunkenness, and, as many report, with a nose as bloated as Randolph's.

But let us be just to him; he did good work for American Independence when his *Common Sense*, and its quiet, keen reasonings counted like an army: and even in his much-maledicted *Age of Reason* are passages like these:—

“It is only in the Creation that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON

. . . Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful."

A monument over an empty tomb—by the roadside, between New Rochelle and White Plains—marks the place where he was once buried.

A HUMORIST

ANOTHER American writer, who was a contemporary of Franklin's and of Paine's—a Philadelphian also, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was Francis Hopkinson.¹

He was a lawyer of great acumen, a man of distinction in many ways; but particularly known in Revolutionary times as the author of a famous ballad called the *Battle of the Kegs*. The Philadelphians had, it appears,

¹ Francis Hopkinson, b. 1737; d. 1791. *Battle of the Kegs*, 1778. His son, Joseph (author of *Hail, Columbia*, 1798), b. 1770; d. 1842.

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

charged a few kegs with powder, and setting a slow match to them, put them adrift—to float down with the tide amongst the British shipping. The ballad deals with the excitement:—

“The soldier flew, the sailor too,
And scared almost to death, Sir,
Wore out their shoes, to spread the news,
And ran till out of breath, Sir.”

Meantime the commander is roused by the uproar in the streets of the affrighted town:—

“At his bedside he then espied
Sir Erskine at command, Sir,
Upon one foot he had one boot,
And th’ other in his hand, Sir.

“Arise! arise! Sir Erskine cries,
The rebels—more’s the pity—
Without a boat are all afloat,
And ranged before the city.”

And the ballad represents the troops as ordered out:—

“The cannons roar from shore to shore,
The small arms make a rattle;
Since wars began I’m sure no man
E’er saw so strange a battle.

BATTLE OF THE KEGS

“The rebel dales—the rebel vales—
With rebel trees surrounded,
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded.

“The fish below, swam to and fro,
Attacked from every quarter,
Why, sure—thought they—the Devil’s to pay
’Mongst folks above the water.

“The kegs, ’t is said, tho’ strongly made
Of rebel staves and hoops, Sir,
Could not oppose their powerful foes,
The conquering British troops, Sir.

“From morn to night these men of might
Display’d amazing courage,
And when the sun was fairly down
Retired, to sup their porridge.

“Such feats did they perform that day
Against these wicked kegs, Sir,
That years to come (*if they get home*),
They ’ll make their boasts and brags, Sir.”

The ballad was immensely popular; perhaps more so than any ballad of Revolutionary times; and I can well remember how (after the first quarter of this century had passed) patriotic school-boys used to love to reel off, in brilliant recitation, that story of the trick of the Yankees upon the obtuse Britishers.

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

But Hopkinson wrote much better things: he was master of a quiet satire and of a dry humor. He has somewhere this squib at the complacent British manufacturer of those days:—

“It is in vain (he says) to tell him that there are many rivers in America in comparison of which the Thames is but a ditch. . . . He goes into his best parlor, and looks at a map of England, four feet square; on the other side of the room he sees a map of *North and South America* not more than two feet square, and exclaims, ‘How can these things be?’ . . . Talk to him of the British Constitution, he will tell you ‘t is a glorious Constitution. . . . Mention freedom of elections, and he will tell you he does not meddle in these matters—that he lives in a borough—that it is impossible, but that *Squire Goose-cap* must represent that borough . . . because *Squire Goose-cap* is acquainted with the prime minister, and his lady comes every *Sunday* to church in a brocaded gown and sits in a pew lined with green cloth. How then can it be otherwise?”

A witty skit, too, which this signer of the Declaration of Independence directed at some exasperating methods of teaching in the schools, is worth our attention, if it be not

METHODS OF TEACHING

worth the attention of our Boards of Education.

“What is a salt-box?” says the *Professor*.

Student.—“It is a box made to contain salt.”

“How is it divided?”

“Into a salt-box and a box of salt.”

Professor says—“Very well; show the distinction.”

“A salt-box may be where there is no salt; but salt is necessary to the existence of a box of salt.”

“Are not salt-boxes otherwise divided?”

“Yes, by a partition.”

“What is the use of this partition?”

“To separate the coarse salt from the fine.”

“How? think a little.”

“To separate the fine from the coarse.”

“To be sure: to separate the fine from the coarse. But are not salt-boxes otherwise distinguished?”

Student. “Yes, into *possible*, *probable*, and *positive*.”

“Define these sorts.”

“A possible salt-box is a salt-box yet unsold in the hands of the joiner.”

“Why so?”

“Because it hath never yet become a salt-box in fact—having never had any salt in it.”

“Very true—now what is a probable salt-box?”

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

“It is a salt-box in the hand of one going to a shop to buy salt, and who hath sixpence in his pocket to buy it with; and a *positive* salt-box is one which hath actually the salt in it.”

Professor. “Is there no instance of a *positive* salt-box which has no salt in it?”

This proves a little puzzling to the student. The Professor helps him out by observing—there *is* one mentioned by some authors: it is where a box by very long usage has become impregnated—“as for instance an empty mackerel-kit.” And so on for eight or ten pages of the exhaustive method. It is said to have had a capital depleting effect upon the plethoric conundrums which had belonged (and in many quarters still belong) to examinations in the public schools.

MURRAY'S GRAMMAR

I HAVE often wondered if any school-book maker of our times has become the same sort of bugbear to young people which Lindley Murray¹ (of the *English Grammar*) used to be for school-boys of sixty years ago? Yet Mr. Murray was a most amiable and respect-

¹ Lindley Murray, b. (in Pennsylvania) 1745; d. (in England) 1826. His *Grammar* first published, 1795.

MURRAY'S GRAMMAR

able man, of Quaker breeding, born not far from Lancaster, Pa., but coming early to New York, where his father became an eminent merchant. This father hoped to bring up the son to a love of his own rigorous business methods; but the rigors were not grateful to the youngster, who escaped them by deserting his home.

The story of this, in an autobiography written late in life, and of the kindly mother's grief, and subsequent joy over the returning prodigal, gives a pretty pathetic coloring to his career, which we should not have looked for in the annals of a grammarian. We find him later a fellow-student with John Jay, in a New York lawyer's office. Again, he is a salt-manufacturer on Long Island, at the time of the British occupation. He thrives, too; perhaps his Quaker breeding, perhaps an inborn loyalism,¹ forbids open or harmful antagonism to royal claims. Certain it is, that he made profitable business ventures in New York (while held by the British forces), and with an easy fortune went to England in 1784, establishing himself in a pretty country home a mile distant from that ancient city of York. He was de-

¹ *Loyalists of the American Revolution*, Lorenzo Sabine, 1847; also *Memoirs*, York, 1826.

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

voted to horticulture, and made his garden there beautiful and famous for its full collection of rare flowers and shrubs. He loved out-of-door sports, too, and had his familiarities with dogs, horses, and guns. He wrote a book on the *Power of Religion* which won the esteem of liberal Christians (1787). The *Grammar* was primarily written for the benefit of a young ladies' school in his immediate neighborhood, and it tangled a world of suffering school-children in America, as well as England, in the toils of its lessons in parsing. Indeed there are retired places yet in the back country where the mention of Murray's *English Grammar* will send a shiver down the spine.

For sixteen years before his death (which did not occur until 1826) the old gentleman was so crippled by disease that he could neither walk nor drive; but from the window of his chamber he could see the bloom of his flowers, and their odors regaled him as he went his way to the pleasant places where parsing is unknown.¹

He was buried in that Quaker cemetery—hemmed in by walls and tufted with trees—

¹ A friend annotates the proof.—“Are you sure? Perhaps he went to the other place, where parsing is known.”

PRESIDENT STILES

which lies under the wing of the County Jail, in the city of York. The family name gave distinctive title to "Murray Hill" of New York; a brother of the Grammarian—a wealthy merchant—was living in that city long after the present century came in; and as I write these lines there lies before me a letter, faded and torn, of the date of 1814, written by an enthusiastic New England maiden, who describes her holiday visit to the city mansion of the great Quaker merchant, John Murray.

PRESIDENT STILES

ANOTHER famous educator—whom some of our grandparents will remember as moving about New Haven streets with a rapid yet precise and assured step—was President Ezra Stiles;¹ not a large man or of very imposing presence, but with a keen eye that swept up and down the chapel benches in a way to keep students in awe of him; tolerating no disrespect—loving ceremony—friendly to a big wig much

¹ Ezra Stiles, b. 1727; d. 1795. *Life*, by Rev. Abiel Holmes, 1798. The first wife of Mr. Holmes was a daughter of President Stiles; his second wife was a Miss Wendell—who became the mother of Dr. O. W. Holmes.

becurled; but withal, kind, dropping a guinea now and then in the way of a poor scholar; always an active student—taking up Hebrew after he was forty; up, too, in Latin always—even to an oration offhand, to welcome Dr. Franklin to New Haven. Again, he was something of an electrician; something of a chemist; something of a mathematician; corresponding with Indian Parsees; an antiquarian; delving into local histories; telling, in a somewhat jumbling and pedantic way, to be sure—all that was known about the New Haven Regicides—about their cave life, and their concealment in the Davenport cellar and at Hatchet Harbor (whose precise locality he leaves somewhat in doubt); a theologian, withal, but an honest, liberal-minded one; forecasting a sound Christian Union, as hopeful preachers do now; full everywhere of such wide charities as to make us forget and excuse the “spread-eagleism” of his literary work. One little fragment from an Election Sermon of his must be given to show his rather ambitious manner. He is eulogizing Washington:—

“Thy fame,” he says, “is of sweeter perfume than Arabian spices in the gardens of Persia. A Baron de Steuben shall waft its fragrance to

PRESIDENT STILES

the monarch of Prussia; a Marquis de Lafayette shall waft it to a far greater monarch, and diffuse thy renown throughout Europe; listening angels shall catch the odour—waft it to heaven, and perfume the universe.”

With all respect for the worthy doctor, I think we must agree that this would be reckoned rather tall writing for a Yale President in our day—unless indeed he were writing on the eve of a foot-ball Revival!

In his historic inquiries the good doctor was disposed to be over-credulous; and in his political vaticinations he was full of a fine, breezy, democratic optimism. No less a man than Chancellor Kent said of the doctor’s plan for an independent, ideal commonwealth—which he confidently looked for on American ground—“it was far superior to the schemes sketched by Milton or Locke or Hume.”¹ President Lincoln’s *dictum* about a “Government for the people and by the people,” would have gone straight to the old gentleman’s heart; and I think he would have looked with an evil eye, and with sharp comment, upon great Trusts and overgrown Corporations.

¹ Phi Beta Kappa Address, delivered at New Haven, 1831, by James Kent.

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

President Stiles left some forty-odd bound volumes of manuscript, which are preserved at his old college. One significant excerpt is taken from his every-day Diary:

“1777: Sept. 19. My election to the Presidency of Yale College is an unexpected and wonderful ordering of Divine Providence. . . . An hundred and fifty or 180 Young Gentlemen Students is a bundle of Wild Fire not easily controlled or governed, and at best the Diadem of a President is a Crown of Thorns”—

To which we say bravo, and Amen!

CHAPTER III

WE opened our last chapter with a glimpse of Southrons who lived by the tributaries of the Chesapeake, and who—like Colonel Byrd—could push their venturesome ways through the Dismal Swamp, or enliven the great Spotswood mansion with their playful gallantries. We tried to give a hint of the social atmosphere of that old Southern city—into which Governor Nicholson had moved the capital from Jamestown—and where Church-of-England rectors taught mathematics in William and Mary College, and sipped their Madeira.

There was a great contrast when we turned from this to the horseback ride of the vivacious Madame Knight through Massachusetts and Connecticut; and still a contrast—though not so pointed—when we entered into the confidences of the amiable Judge Sewall, and listened to his tirade against those bewigged sinners who loved the hypocrisies of the world,

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

and—of dress. We had our look at Benjamin Franklin in his *Almanac rôle* of Poor Richard, and in his larger *rôle* as master of a home at Passy or Versailles, where Madame Helvetius shone at his table, and Mistress Adams beamed upon her with stern New England judgment in her eyes.

Tom Paine assisted at our gathering, the ichor of an acrid Voltairean scepticism oozing from his pen-strokes, and blurring somehow the fairer and more ennobling lines which had belonged to his *Rights of Man*. Then came the drum-beat of balladry from Philadelphia, savoring of a battle-spirit that had waked even the Quaker city; lastly we had conference with Dr. Stiles—a piquant, active, garrulous, learned little man, who held the presidency—half against his will—of Yale College, where he had received Benjamin Franklin (who plotted a printing-office near the middle of the present line of colleges¹), with a burst of eulogistic Latinity; and who, if we had dallied with his Diary—further—would have told us how he entertained, one day in July, 1794, no less a person than Talleyrand (not then at the height of his renown, but only Bishop of Au-

¹ Professor Dexter, *Biographies of Graduates*, vol. ii., Art., *Ezra Stiles*.

GROUPING OF COLONIES

tun); and how he found him full of candor and intelligence, "and very inquisitive."

GROUPING OF COLONIES

WE have wandered up and down the coast from Maine to the Chesapeake, as we may have been allured by the voice of a rousing preacher, the story of venturesome travel, the planting of a college, or the tingle of a poem. But even our wayward drift has not carried mention of all the American colonies which only a little after the middle of the eighteenth century were beginning to put out tentacular feelers—one toward the other as if apprehensive of an overshadowing and common danger; and this sense of a common danger was to grow apace.

Far below the waters of the Chesapeake and the Dismal Swamp we might have found picturesque material for these talks on American lands, in those Georgia regions, where the benevolent but vain and pugnacious Oglethorpe, in his cocked hat and short clothes, had tried—somewhat vainly—to marry great charities with the colonial machinery, and had trailed after him to the everglades by Savannah such men as John and Charles Wesley, and Macpherson, the foster-father of the Ossian poems,

AMERICAN LANDS & LETTERS

and where Whitefield had lifted up his voice all athrill with evangelical loves and fears. Florida in those times was purely Spanish, dominated by the old shell-stone Fort of St. Augustine;¹ and few Englishmen as yet had listened to the singing of her mocking-birds or watched the ponderous alligators surging into her placid bayous.

In Carolina, which as early as 1670 had a constitution devised by the famous John Locke, there had been emergence of the names of Governors Bull and Middleton before the middle of the next century; and a Routledge was to represent with dignity the interests of Charleston folk at the clan-gathering (1774) in Philadelphia. In Virginia—besides those already named—there was a sharp Governor Dinwiddie, a Scotchman and a Presbyterian—not finding much favor with Cavaliers—who had in a way discovered George Washington—a young gentleman of dignity and unusual faculties—and had set him to engineering work in the Appalachian wilds.

There were other Virginia names, coming, “to the fore” in the times of Braddock’s de-

¹ Vainly attacked by Governor Moore, of South Carolina, in 1702; and again, as vainly, by Governor Oglethorpe, of Georgia, in 1740.

PENNSYLVANIA

feat, which belonged to those who were to make history or literature or both—such as the Randolphs, Madison, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. Maryland had its interests—largely independent of other colonies, and centering very much in Lord Baltimore and other Calverts—in border squabbles with Pennsylvania, and in a Romanism which was sagacious enough to be tolerant.

As for the colony of Pennsylvania—which had the nourishing care of that son of Admiral Penn who had forsworn all the gayeties of the world (as illustrated and exhibited in the Paris of his day), to live by Quaker simplicities and honesties—it had grown apace. In Philadelphia, as early as 1698, “fine squares and courts,” and stately houses of brick had been established. We have already followed Benjamin Franklin to the city where he established the first American magazine and became master-patron in all intellectual projects. Thence came the whimsicalities of Mr. Lawyer Hopkinson; and as early as 1746 there was set up a “log-college” some twenty miles north of Philadelphia, which developed ultimately into that Nassau Hall, which still flings its banners of literary and scientific triumph into the quiet skies of Princeton.

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As for New York, as early as Charles II.'s time the Dutch standards had gone out and away from Manhattan Island: the stout and choleric Peter Stuyvesant (who was the last Dutch Governor) was not a match for the Connecticut Governor, Eaton, in a bargain for boundaries; nor could he rout the troops of the Duke of York. If not literary himself the Dutch magistrate was a cause of literature in others; and long ago he has stumped his way upon his wooden leg to an immortality in print —carved out for him by the witty and illustrious Diedrich Knickerbocker. English influences mingled there healthily with Holland blood, and prepared the ground for a "King's College" (1754), and for such natives or newcomers as Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, John Jay, and Philip Freneau.

As early as 1665 the Connecticut colony had joined forces with the colony of New Haven under the tactics of Governor Winthrop the Younger, and henceforth there was to be no further strife between them, until the legislative battle of our times about the planting of a new capital, in—Hartford or New Haven. And this resolved itself—as such battles always do—in favor of the party showing most zeal, most money, and most activity.

MASSACHUSETTS

The colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts did not merge until the year 1692, when Governor Bradstreet—husband of the poetess—gave over the reins of power to the dashing Sir William Phipps—native of Maine and one of a family of twenty-six children;¹ he had been shepherd, carpenter, ship-master, and was knighted by James II. Among other succeeding governors were Joseph Dudley, Hutchinson, and last (under British dispensation) that Governor and General Gage,² who had served in company with young Washington on the Monongahela, who ordered the assault upon Bunker Hill (1775), and whose account of the battle of Lexington—a lively bit of literature—may be found in *fac-simile* in the *Memorial History of Boston*. He wrote letters, too, which were answered by Samuel Adams—whom he did not love; nor did he love any better John Hancock, who within a half dozen years was to supplant him as chief magistrate of those regions.

We have thus grouped the colonies, and some of their front figures—so that the reader

¹ William Phipps, b. 1651; d. 1695. Vid. Bowen's *Life of Sir William Phipps*, 1834–37.

² Thomas Gage, b. 1721; d. 1787. Vid. *Queries*, etc., Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, vol. xxxiv.

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may have at least a shadowy historic background for the quieter talks we have in view, and upon which we now enter.

PRESIDENT, PREACHER, AND POET

DWIGHT,¹ who immediately succeeded that lively, bouncing Dr. Stiles, of whom we had speech, was of a different order; statelier, more dignified, less credulous, with tastes more chastened, with acquirements—perhaps not larger, but better in hand. A shrewd observer says the change “was like the passage from a type of the eighteenth century to an earnest of the nineteenth.”²

Dr. Dwight, when elected, was forty-four, and minister to a church in Fairfield; he was grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and had inherited his theologic views, though urging them with more conciliatory graces. He had waked, too, in his callow days, the solitudes of Greenfield Hill, with his trumpetings in verse—verse not very much read perhaps in these degenerate days; but wrought with classic

¹ Timothy Dwight, b. 1752; d. 1817. *Conquest of Canaan* (1785); *Theology Explained*, etc. (1818); *Travels* (1821-22).

² Professor Dexter. *Sketch of Yale*, etc.

TIMOTHY DWIGHT

roundness, and with a pleasant aroma in it of Dr. Beattie, of Goldsmith, and of Crabbe. A little touch of his pleasant satire and early New Englandism is cited; it is in a picture of the "Smooth Divine":

"No terrors on his gentle tongue attend,
No grating truths the nicest ear offend,
• • • • • • •
'T was best, he said, mankind should cease to
sin;
Good fame required it; so did peace within.
Their honors—well he knew—would ne'er be
driven;
But hoped they still would please to go to
Heaven.
Each week he paid his visitation dues;
Coaxed, jested, laughed; rehears'd the private
news,
Smok'd with each goody, thought her cheese
excell'd,
Her pipe he lighted, and her baby held.
Or placed in some great town, with lacquered
shoes,
Trim wig, and trimmer gown, and glistening
hose,
He bowed, talk'd politics, learn'd manners mild,
Most meekly questioned, and most smoothly
smil'd.
• • • • • • •

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Most daintily on pampered turkeys dined
Nor shrunk with fasting, nor with study pined,
Yet from their churches saw his brethren
driven,
Who thundered truth and spoke the voice of
heaven,
Chilled trembling guilt, in Satan's headlong
path,
Charm'd the feet back, and roused the ear of
Death."

The superfine critics will, very likely, sniff at this; yet, to my matter-of-fact mind it seems fairly up to the average of much of the decasyllabic verse of that period. I must confess, also, to finding occasional pleasure in running through odd pages of so homely a book as Dr. Dwight's horseback *Travels*. A rather refreshing odor of old New England days seems to blow through it, up and down—redeeming its narrative, its staid reflections, and its stores of anecdote; withal there is such air of sincerity that one is tempted to accept its toughest stories—as when, for instance, a certain traveller on horseback arrives after night-fall at a village lying upon the banks of the Connecticut (or perhaps the Housatonic?). The host of the tavern where he *puts up*—as New Englanders say—asks the traveller which

DWIGHT'S TRAVELS

way he has come? He has come from the West:

“And pray, sir, how did you cross the river?”

“By the bridge, of course,” says the traveller. Whereat the Boniface holds up his hands in amazement and awe; and no wonder; for (so runs the story) the bridge timbers had been put in position only the day before, and not a plank of its flooring had been laid, so that the traveller’s horse must have strode, in the dark, from sleeper to sleeper, over five hundred feet of flood. Naturally the traveller was incredulous; but next morning, when taken to the bridge, an appalling sense of his last night’s danger brought him to a dead faint. Many a boy of gone-bye days plodding through those tales of travel has wondered why the good doctor did not write more of like marvellous intention. Many a pious matron, too, cherishes in her heart and memory Dwight’s version of Psalm 137—“I love thy kingdom, Lord”—as it used to be choired in country churches.

It was, however, as teacher and divine—rather than as literary man—that the great and worthy reputation of Dr. Dwight was won; while to the management of the second college

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in New England he brought a zeal, a sagacity, a religious devotion, which—united with the aptitudes of a man of the world—made his success eminent and abiding.

HARTFORD WITS AND OTHERS

JOHN TRUMBULL, the author of *McFingal*, was two years older than Dwight, and preceded him by two years in college; indeed the astonishing story is told of Trumbull—that he was examined for admission when only seven, and passed; though it was thought wisest to stay his admission until he was thirteen. Such precocity is, fortunately, not very common. General Humphreys (to give him his later title), who was a fellow-collegian, was a year the junior of Dwight; and Joel Barlow, the author of *Hasty Pudding* and other literary comestibles, was, again, the junior of Humphreys by two years—graduating while Dwight was tutor. But all these were hail-fellows-well-met, and began, while yet on college-benches, to sharpen their literary quills and to waken the echoes around New Haven with their “Hail, Columbias!”

HARTFORD WITS

Trumbull, Humphreys, and Barlow¹ were among the leading members of that company of clever versifiers and pungent satirists who—a little later, and through the years immediately preceding and following the Revolutionary War were known as the Hartford Wits. And it is not a little noteworthy that in the years so momentous in our history, the best known coterie of belles-lettres workers—best known at home and best known abroad—should have been one of Connecticut men—men born there and living there, and swayed into literary courses by influences beginning at Yale—where John Trumbull was tutor, and Dwight and Barlow and Humphreys were, in a sense, his fellows, and where these all pitched voices together to the tune of

“Columbia! Columbia! to glory arise,
The Queen of the World and Child of the
Skies!”

As I turn over the pages of those who have made—more or less voluminous—chronicle of American literary doings in those days, I see

¹ John Trumbull, b. (Connecticut) 1750; d. (Michigan) 1831. David Humphreys, b. (Derby) 1752; d. (New Haven) 1818. Joel Barlow, b. (Redding) 1754; d. (Poland) 1812.

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plenty of conspicuous names in scattered array, hailing from different quarters of the Old Colonies—John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Otis, Fisher Ames, Josiah Quincy, John Jay; but not many identified with any such imaginative work as people ever did cherish much, or can now recall. There is Philip Freneau, indeed—at once mariner, poet and publicist, and who wrote ingenious and commendable verses, which may be referred to again; there was a Mistress Bleecker (of the Schuyler family) making some tuneful lays which drifted melodiously down from the upper waters of the Hudson; there was Hopkinson, of whom mention has been made, and whose son, Joseph, was pluming himself for his grandiloquent and patriotic song; but from the Massachusetts Colony there was not much musical symphony—not so much, certainly, as to belittle or obscure that weakly, half-tender, half-classical note which belonged to the utterance of the poor negro girl Phillis Wheatley¹—who had been sold in Boston market, and who came to the writing of poems which had publication in London, where

¹ Phillis Wheatley, b. (Africa) about 1753; d. (Boston) 1784. By marriage to one of her own race she became Mrs. John Peters.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

she went upon a visit to reap her honors. There was not much in them save such happy echoes of the masters of the lyre as showed eager cognizance of poetic ranges of thought. I excerpt a couplet of the smoothest lines:

“The Goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel bind her golden hair.”

This does not sound like the note of one from Afric wilds; yet it occurs with other not unmusical lines in an address, which the young African was pleased to send with her compliments to the Generalissimo of the American forces; and the General made acknowledgment by an autograph that would be worth cherishing:—

“If you should ever come to Cambridge [Miss Phillis], or near headquarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the Muses, and to whom Nature has been so liberal, and beneficent in her dispensations: I am, with great respect,
your obedient humble serv^t,

GEO: WASHINGTON.”

And so Phillis Wheatley, with that testimonial, and with her forefinger to her cheek, in meditative mood—as shown in an old pic-

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ture—goes down to history as one of the “singers.”

But these I have named made, after all, what the doctors would call only sporadic cases: the real epidemic of *belles-lettres* at this period was in Connecticut.

AUTHOR OF *McFINGAL*

It was in 1772 that John Trumbull, already named—a worthy representative of a much and deservedly honored family, and then tutor at Yale, published his so-called *Progress of Dullness*—an octosyllabic poem in three parts, smoothly worked, with happy jingle in it and pleasant satire. The first part deals with Tom Bainless—a student of those times—who is fed on the mere husks of classicism, to no good purpose; and the rhyme is intended to set forth and satirize the neglect in educational methods, of all the higher ranges of literature and of the humanities. Says this Yale Tutor of 1771:

“Oh, might I live to see that day
When sense shall point to youths their way,
Through every maze of Science guide:
O'er Education's laws preside;



Published according to Act of Parliament, Sept. 1. 1773 by Arch^d. Bell,
Bookseller N^o 8 near the Saracens Head Aldgate.

Phillis Wheatley
From the frontispiece to the poems

TRUMBULL'S POEMS

The good retain with just discerning,
Explode the quackeries of learning,
Give ancient arts their real due,
Explain their faults and beauties too;
Teach where to imitate and mend,
And point their uses and their end."

The second part deals with the Dudes, who,

"From endless loads of novels gain
Soft, simpering tales of amorous pain,
With double meanings neat and handy
From Rochester and Tristram Shandy."

In the third part of the poem we have the flirt—

"Deck'd in her most fantastic gown
Because a stranger 's come to town."

Then follow the tactics of the meeting-house, where, in those days, young women sat in one gallery, and students in the opposite one.—

"To church, the female squadrons move,
All arm'd with weapons used in love,
As tho' they meant to take by blows
Th' opposing gallery of beaux :
Like colored ensigns gay and fair
High caps rise floating in the air,

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Bright silk its varied radiance flings,
And streamers wave in kissing-strings:
Each bears the artillery of her charms
Like training bands at viewing arms.
So once, in fear of Indian beating,
Our grandsires bore their guns to meeting,
Each man equipp'd on Sunday morn
With psalm-book, shot, and powder-horn,
And look'd in form, as all must grant,
Like th' ancient, true church militant;
Or fierce, like modern deep Divines,
Who fight with quills, like porcupines."

It is certain that Mr. Timothy Dwight—then a Senior in the college—was stirred by the wit and play of these verses into some of his earlier rhythmic utterances; and as I have before said, these two poets were fully at one in their zeal and ambition to kindle livelier literary impulses than had prevailed under the bare bones of the old classic dietetics.

Later, Trumbull went to study law in Boston; was in the office of John Adams—a good place to get lifted into the exaltations of mind which were then kindling the Sons of Liberty. And out of some of these exaltations came shortly after, his Hudibrastic poem of *McFingal*—a boisterous, witty, humorsome satire, in which the loyalists, the Tories, and the Church

McFINGAL

people (as being good kingsmen) all caught the lash of his crackling rhymes. As I look over its hot-pressed pages (a capital large paper edition of it, with funniest of illustrations, was published in Hartford in 1820) and catch the tintinnabulation of its sportive, easy, rollicking flow, I am half-disposed to wonder why idle people should not, and do not, read it still. For an American it should make more piquant reading than Butler's *Hudibras*. There 's no dreaming in it; there 's no swashy sentiment; it does not stay to moralize; it goes on its rhythmic and satiric beat—as steady and sure and effective as a patent threshing-machine. A capital thing it must have been for a town hero, or patriotic spouter, to read aloud in a tavern with the flip-maker keeping beat with his toddy-stick!

I hardly know where to clip in order to give a good taste of *McFingal*; one may cull at haphazard:—

“At once with resolution fatal
Both Whigs and Tories rush^d to battle,
Instead of weapons, either band
Seized on such arms as came to hand,
And as famed Ovid paints th' adventures
Of wrangling Lapithæ and Centaurs,
Who, at their feast, by Bacchus led,

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Threw bottles at each other's head;
And then arms failing in their scuffles
Attack'd with andirons, tongs, and shovels;
So clubs and billets, staves and stones,
Met fierce, encountering every sconce,
And cover'd o'er with knobs and pains
Each void receptacle for brains.
Their clamors rend the skies around,
The hills rebellow to the sound;
And many a groan increased the din
From battered nose and broken shin."

The tarring and feathering process, adjudged in town-meeting to the lusty Tory McFingal, is worth repeating as a unique description of that old piquant New England method of administering justice:

"Forthwith the crowd proceed to deck
With haltered noose McFingal's neck,
While he in peril of his soul
Stood tied half-hanging to the pole;
Then lifting high the ponderous jar
Pour'd o'er his head the smoaking tar;
With less profusion once was spread
Oil on the Jewish monarch's head,
That down his beard and vestment ran,
And covered all his outward man.

• • • • •
So from the high-raised urn the torrents
Spread down his side their various currents;

McFINGAL

His flowing wig, as next the brim,
First met and drank the sable stream;
Adown his visage stern and grave
Roll'd and adhered the viscid wave;
With arms depending as he stood,
Each cuff capacious holds the flood:
From nose and chin's remotest end
The tarry icicles descend;
Till all o'erspread, with colors gay,
He glittered to the Western ray
Like sleet-bound trees in wintry skies,
Or Lapland idol carv'd in ice.
And now the feather-bag display'd
Is waved in triumph o'er his head,
And clouds him o'er with feathers missive
And, down upon the tar, adhesive:
Not Maia's son, with wings for ears,
Such plumage round his visage wears;
Not Milton's six-wing'd angel gathers
Such superfluity of feathers."

There are abounding local allusions in Trumbull's verse—some a little dim now; and there is a bold heralding of the actual names and titles—mock or real—of aggressive Tories or Mountebanks, dashed in high and low—as the humor serves—with an easier freedom than belongs to modern satirists; and I cannot but wonder what such a master of trenchant irony and scathing ridicule would have made of the

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fiscal methods of our railway wreckers, or of the pretty complacencies of our McAllisters and the elegant Four Hundred.

As a lawyer Trumbull eventually established himself at Hartford, and there became the dean of that club of good fellows to which I have once or twice alluded. Later in life he abandoned poetry and held high judicial station.

HOPKINS AND HUMPHREYS

DR. HOPKINS¹ was another of the club; he was not a Yale man—but of good education and of better natural parts. So keen a judge as the late Dr. Bacon was disposed to reckon him the wittiest of the coterie; he became a physician of high reputation; and a little squib of his at the expense of General Ethan Allen, who had made his scepticism unnecessarily blatant, is well worth our reading:—

“Lo, Allen, 'scaped from British jails,
His tushes broke by biting nails,
Appears in Hyperborean skies
To tell the world the Bible lies.

• • • • •

¹ Lemuel Hopkins, b. (Waterbury, Conn.) 1750; d. (Hartford) 1801. He began practice of medicine at Litchfield, Conn., and removed to Hartford about 1783.

HOPKINS AND HUMPHREYS

Behold him move, ye stanch Divines!
His tall head bustling thro' the pines;
All front he seems like wall of brass,
And brays tremendous as an Ass;
One hand is clenched to batter noses,
While t'other scrawls 'gainst Paul and Moses."

General David Humphreys was another of the club, more given than the others, I should think, to social repartee; he was more of an *élégant*; inclined also to military parade in verse and manner; coming later to much actual service in that line—being a trusted aid of Washington's, and justifying his career not only by honest fighting but by honest pictures of fighting; for instance,—

“Troops strive with troops; ranks bending, press
on ranks;
O'er slippery plains the struggling legions reel;
Then livid lead and Bayonne's glittering steel
With dark red wounds their mangled bosoms
bore;
While furious coursers snorting foam and gore
Bear wild their riders o'er the carnaged plain,
And falling, roll them headlong on the slain.”

Humphreys had, after the war was over, a long European experience; was minister at

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Lisbon,¹ where he married at forty-five a rich English lady; afterward he was at Madrid, where he interested himself specially—and interested the country too—in the exportation to America of Spanish merino sheep; he established woollen works at Seymour, Conn. (originally called Humphreysville); and many a politician of those days was proud to wear a home-made suit of home-grown wool from the factory of General Humphreys. In some doggerel under date of 1780, addressed to a Boston lady (he was always fond of addressing his verses to ladies), he says:—

“Some days elaps^d, I jogged quite brave on
And found my Trumbull at Newhav-on,
Than whom more humor never man did
Possess—nor lives a soul more candid.
Barlow I saw, and there began
My friendship for that spotless man;

¹ Robert Southey writes from Lisbon, under date of February, 1796, to an English correspondent: “Timothy Dwight, an American, publish^d, in 1785, an heroic poem on the Conquest of Canaan. I had heard of it, and long wished to read it, in vain; but now, the American Minister (a good-natured man, *whose poetry is worse than anything except his criticism*) has lent me the book. There certainly is some merit in the poem; but when Colonel Humphreys speaks of it, he will not allow me to put in a word in defence of John Milton.” Southey’s *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i., p. 269.

GENERAL HUMPHREYS

Whom tho' the world does *not yet* know it
Great nature form'd her loftiest poet.
But Dwight was absent at Northampton,
That bard sublime, and virtue's champion,
To whom the charms of verse belong
The father of our Epic Song."

The reader will perceive that in this Connecticut coterie there was a good deal of that mutual admiration drifting about in verse, which is not altogether discarded in our modern cities. Dwight praises Trumbull; Trumbull praises Dwight; Barlow praises Humphreys; Humphreys praises all. Yet Trumbull has a pleasant little joke on Humphreys's diplomatic appointment: "Tell him"—he says (in a letter to Oliver Wolcott)—"not to be discouraged; and for his comfort tell him this story: A king being angry with an ambassador, asked him whether his master had no wise men at court, and was therefore obliged to send him a fool? 'Sire,' said the other, 'my master has many wise men about his court, but he conceived me the most proper ambassador to your Majesty.'"¹

¹ Gibbs's *Memoirs of Administration of Washington and Adams*.

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JOEL BARLOW

JOEL BARLOW was a Western Connecticut man; within recent years the house was still standing, in the town of Redding, in which he was born. He was a more ambitious and mammon-seeking man than his poetic fellows of Hartford; and though winning a noisy distinction became alienated in a large degree from his old associates. Nor does it appear that General Humphreys's judgment of him as "first of the poets," has been fully confirmed. In the youthful "Hail-Columbia" period, after graduation at Yale, he served for awhile as chaplain in camps of newly gathered soldiers; and from some entries in his diary, and in his correspondence, he must have made a rather droll chaplain. Indeed the Connecticut Congregational Society (having some doubts of his orthodoxy and steadfastness) would not qualify him; so he was obliged to go to the Council of Northampton for a permit. He was in the throes of his betrothal at that time; and he writes on one occasion—to his "dear Ruthy" (his *fiancée*) :—

"I have been to attend the execution of Major André. A *politer* gentleman, or a greater char-

JOEL BARLOW

acter of his age, perhaps is not alive. He was dressed completely, and suffered with calmness and cheerfulness. With an appearance of philosophy and heroism he observed that he was beyond the fear of death, by the consciousness that every action of his life had been honorable; that in a few minutes he sh'd be out of all pleasure or pain. Whether he has altered his mind, or whether he has any mind, is now best known to himself. My heart is thrown into a flutter, my dear, at the sight."

This is not the sort of a letter that Chaplain Dwight, or a Chaplain Hooker, would have written after such a scene as the hanging of André; and Barlow goes on, to his dear Ruthy:—

"My situation in the army grows more and more agreeable. I am as hearty and healthy as I can be in yr absence. I gave them a preaching yesterday for the fourth time—a flaming political sermon, occasioned by the treachery of Arnold. I had a number of gentlemen from the other brigades, and I am told it did me great honor: I had a letter last week from General Greene to dine with him."

And again, later, "I have preach'd at Redding since I saw you; and shall have to do it

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again if I stay here another Sunday." Indeed the tone of many of his earlier letters does not incline one to the highest respect; yet it was in these times that he was winning favor by patriotic verses and by his *Vision of Columbus* —the start-point for his later and more elaborate *Columbiad*. He was employed by those in authority in such matters to revamp and make musical the old psalm-book, which he did; and some of his versions had great favor,¹ and are, I think, still in the accredited psalmodies.

When peace-times came about he dropped his chaplaincy, married, studied law, established himself at Hartford, where he became one of the Club of Wits. He planted a newspaper there, too, upon which a certain Noah Webster—known to New Haven people—was for a time a friendly collaborateur; though this friendship broke down under French Revolutionary stress in after-years. But Hartford, even with its corps of Anarchiad writers, made too small a field for Barlow; nor was there much moneied return from the *Vision of Columbus*. We learn of his going presently to Paris to represent a "Scioto Land Company."

¹ Specially may be noted the version of Psalm CXXXVIII., "Along the banks where Babel's current flows," etc.

JOEL BARLOW

a company which had ingenious fraud at the bottom of it, as one may infer from some parts of the prospectus which brought it to the knowledge of innocent French investors:—

“The Ohio climate,” said this buoyant circular, “is wholesome and delightful; frost even in winter is almost entirely unknown, and a river, called by way of Eminence, the Beautiful, abounds in excellent fish of a vast size: [and there are] noble forests, consisting of trees that spontaneously produce sugar, and a plant that yields ready-made candles.”

It is probable that the poet was ignorant of the extent of the fraud which underlaid the Scioto scheme, and it is certain that he soon abandoned it. But he was not long in France before he was fully inoculated with French *virus*—the *virus* social, the *virus* political, and the *virus* sceptical. Yet he showed himself a man of large parts; he was never a do-nothing; he made people at home hear of him and people abroad hear of him. Some trenchant political writing of his, in sympathy with the Girondist party of France and the Liberals of England—had the honor of being commended in Parliament by the great orator Charles James Fox, and of meeting with excoriating mention from

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no less a man than Edmund Burke. Through his friend Humphreys, then (I think) Minister at Lisbon, Barlow was commissioned to go to Algiers, and arrange matters with the Dey, who was capturing American ships up and down the Mediterranean. He had just the qualities for this work—dogged, persistent—bandying promises and threats so well that his success was complete. With this he had managed his own affairs so shrewdly that before leaving the barbarian court, he was chartering and despatching his own ships almost by squadrons.

In an interval of his foreign residence he passed a summer in Savoy; and a smoking dish of *Polenta* there, reviving his memories of New England corn-meal, he gushed out in what is perhaps his best poem—*The Hasty Pudding*,¹ dedicated to Mrs. General Washington. I give this taste of it:—

“Dear Hasty Pudding, what unpromised joy
Expands my heart to meet thee in Savoy!
Doom^d o'er the world thro' devious paths to
roam,
Each clime my country, and each house my
home,

¹ Published in New Haven in 1796.

BARLOW'S POEMS

My soul is soothed, my cares have found an
end,
I greet my long lost, unforgotten friend.

Some talk of Hoe-cake, fair Virginia's pride,
Rich *Johnny Cake* this mouth has often tried;
Both please me well, their virtues much the
same,
Alike their fabric as allied their fame.

But place them all before me smoking hot,
The big, round dumpling rolling from the pot,
The pudding of the bag, whose quivering
breast
With suet lined, leads on the Yankee feast.

The yellow bread whose face like amber glows
And all of *Indian* that the bake-pot knows—
You tempt me not; my favorite greets my eyes,
To that loved bowl my spoon by instinct flies."

After eighteen years of absence, Barlow, a very rich man now, and a very French man, returned to America and equipped a beautiful country house, long standing in the valley of the Potomac, near to Washington. He had outlived in a large degree his old Hartford friendships and most of his New Haven ones. He had a nephew at Yale, in those days, and

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he writes to the father of the lad: "It 's not best to give Tommy any unfavorable ideas [of the President—Dwight], for on some accts he is doubtless respectable." His new friends are the friends of Jefferson; and the old Hartford Wits—changed as they were in many things—were unchanged in their abhorrence of Jefferson and of Tom Paine—whom they were wont to link together.

Under the new democratic influences prevailing, Mr. Barlow was, after a few years of showy and luxurious life in his Virginia home, sent as ambassador to France (1811): it was in the days of the conquering Napoleon; and to meet the needs of his diplomatic errand he was compelled to follow the Emperor on his great and fatal Russian expedition. But before he reached head-quarters the tide of French successes had turned; and Minister Barlow, caught in the whirl and crash of the great retreat, found himself embayed and stranded at a wayside Polish inn—with the storms of the war and of the elements howling together—and there, fevered by his exposure, and threatened by predatory bands of Cossacks, this American ambassador, and youngest of the Hartford wits, died in 1812. I have told his story at some length, because his life

A STRAIN OF QUAKERISM

seemed to me an interesting one. It was full of grit—full of Yankee capacity for bargainings—full of ambitions: there were little poetic uplifts in it, but none of them very high. Fine print and paper and illustrations and Paris elaboration still left the *Columbiad* a stale and a heavy book. We are more proud of a good many others of the Hartford coterie than of Barlow; yet I think he has been unduly abused. John Adams, in a letter to Washington (October, 1798), when alluding to a paper of Barlow's, is somewhat rash when he says:—

“Tom Paine is not a more worthless fellow!” and continues, “ ‘T is not often we meet with a composition which betrays so many and so unequivocal symptoms of blackness of heart.” But that was in the middle of a political campaign; no such excuse belongs to some modern historians who have put him into the glare of an abusive and damnatory rhetoric.

A STRAIN OF QUAKERISM

It is surprising how much a little chance commendatory word from some appreciative, sensitive mind—so much better than the perfunctory praises of the advertising department—will quicken one's appetite for an author!

Thus Charles Lamb said of that quiet, homely, God-serving Quaker, John Woolman—"Get the writings of John Woolman by heart!" And again, that thorough world's-man and "diner-out" of the last century, Crabbe Robinson, said of Woolman's *Journal*:—"A perfect gem! His religion was love. His whole existence and all his passions were love."—All which sharpens one for a taste of Woolman! Yet in these times few people read his book: its simplicities are tempting; and it bears much the same relation to the moral themes touched upon which White's little *Selborne* book about the swallows and the hills bears to external nature. It is sublimated through and through by a tender honesty, which in these days does not bear exposure; or, it were better to say—rarely gets exposure. We cannot stay for its unctuous simplicities; we cannot forget it.

Next we come to a very different writer, also of Quaker origin, and much heard of in days long gone as out earliest American novelist. Charles Brockden Brown¹ was a man of keen sensibilities—excellently well-intentioned—with humanities large and active, but with curiously fantastic notions about the construction of fiction. I could never bring myself

¹ Charles Brockden Brown, b. 1771; d. 1810.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

into a state of enjoyment in reading one of his books—not even for a dozen consecutive pages; one wonders; one is piqued; one admires bits of description; one acquiesces solemnly in some solemn bits of excellent philosophical remark; again you are astounded by some sudden piece of claptrap—as much as ever in a theatre where a melodrama has had its lines enforced and intensified by the tricks of a clever stage-mechanician.

This seems hardly the serious way in which to speak of the distinguished author who must always be an interesting figure in the history of American literary development; interesting, because honestly intentioned—because pure-thoughted; interesting, because among the first, if not the very first this side the water, who undertook to make a profession of belles-lettres work—in which aim he had a very considerable success (if not a moneyed one); and he made his better books popular, not only here, but measurably in England. It was a day when Godwin's *Caleb Williams* was popular, and the *Castle of Otranto*.

We have unfortunately no good life of Brockden Brown. His friend Dunlap¹ wrote

¹William Dunlap, b. 1766; d. 1839. *Life of Brown*, published 1815.

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a cumbrous work about him in a couple of octavos; but it is dull. Poor Brown was physically of feeble make, and grew feebler by over-study: whereupon Dunlap remarks:—

“What a pity it is that the application which assimilates man most to the exalted idea which we form of immortal perfection should so certainly tend to enfeeble his body and shorten his mortal existence, while the brutalizing occupations of continued and thought-expelling labor give firmness and vigor and duration to the frame of man.”

Such a sentence makes one—makes me at any rate—want to throw a book in the fire: and this feeling renews itself at frequent intervals. The historian Prescott, in his green author days, made a compend of this life for Sparks’s *American Biographies*—in which—speaking of Brown’s giving up the study of law for literature he observes:—

“Few indeed like Mansfield have been able so far to constrain their young and buoyant imaginations as to merit the beautiful eulogium of the English poet; while many more, comparatively, from the time of Juvenal downwards, fortunately for the world, have been willing to sacrifice the affections plighted to Themis on the altars of the Muse.”

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

This is hardly the sort of writing which puts a live creature before us. We know that Brown was a man of feeble constitution—that with strong literary tastes he early abandoned the study of law: we know also that in his youthful days those dreams of great literary conquests which intrall so many young people of kindred tastes floated enticingly before him. A great epic on the Discovery of America, another with Pizarro for its subject, and yet a third upon the Conquests of Cortez, were among the visions that fed his hopes and faded as he grew. I think he would have laid deep, strong colors upon an epic whose background was laid among far-away mountains and people swart and of fiery passions; but these ambitious projects were early abandoned. Some gorgeous architectural problems are also understood to have enlisted his youthful attentions, in which the curious, and not always happy, constructive abilities that went afterward to the plotting of his tales, were given fanciful range; but these, like the epics, have left no permanent traces.

BROWN'S NOVELS

IT appears that a near kinsman of the young author (from whom he received his name of Brockden) had a strange touch of romance in his history; for while this kinsman was still a student in England he had unwittingly overheard the plottings of conspirators against the life of Charles II. (at that time monarch). This fact coming to the knowledge of the plotters, they queried if it were better to kill so dangerous a witness, or send him out of the country. The latter course was decided upon, and Brockden lived to become a legal conveyancer of eminence in Philadelphia. And we can well imagine that young Brockden Brown, with that old family tradition of escape from assassination simmering in his brain, may have thereby given a more lurid color to the mysterious happenings and counter-happenings of his stories. The dark closets, the movable panels in the wainscot, the trap-doors, the strange noises—might all grow out of the germ of the conspiracy, and the deathly peril of an unwitting listener.

Not a little, curious, ponderous correspondence of Brown appears in Dunlap's life; but this ponderosity did not forbid lively com-

BROWN'S NOVELS

panionships; no man ever had truer friends; no man ever loved them better. Among them was Dr. Eli Smith—a native of Litchfield, of fine literary parts, who had formed one, and not an ignoble one, of the Hartford coterie, and who was established at New York at the time of Brown's intimacy with him. 'T was he who introduced him to the "Friendly Club" of New York—of which James Kent, Anthony Bleecker, and Dr. Mitchill were members; and it was under these new influences, after several abortive feints at authorship, that Brockden Brown at length made publication of his first noticeable novel of *Wieland*.

It is a grawsome story. Its chief personage (not hero) is a morbid, superstitious, fanatical man, yet full of tenderest affections for all about him; he is tortured by uncanny visions and by strange, unearthly voices. Thus borne on by a dreary and awful current of infatuation, his warped affections urge him pitilessly to the murder of those who have been nearest and dearest to him. The novelist riots in the dismal scenes of the slaughter; he uses blood, and knife, and bludgeon, and vain struggles of imploring innocence, with a particularity of touch and color that are almost fascinating. And this fanatic, dealing out slaughter in the

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depths of a quiet country-house, is made to exult in his victory over natural affections, in obedience to higher and more authoritative voices. He muses over the corpse of his victim:—

“Where is her bloom? These deadly and blood-suffused orbs but ill resemble the azure and ecstatic tenderness of her eyes. The lucid stream that meandered over that bosom, the glow of love that was wont to sit upon that cheek, are much unlike these livid stains and this hideous deformity. Alas, these were the traces of agony; the gripe of the assassin had been here!”

When brought to trial for murder he raves in this fashion:—

“I will not dwell upon my lapse into desperate and outrageous sorrow. The breath of Heaven that sustained me was withdrawn, and I sank into *mere man*. I leaped from the floor; I dashed my head against the wall; I uttered screams of horror; I panted after torment and pain. Eternal fire and the bickerings of hell, compared with what I felt, were music and a bed of roses.”

And what, pray, is the provocative to this demoniacal, slaughtering frenzy, in which all good influences are blown to the winds? Only

ARTHUR MERVYN

the ventriloquial tricks of a loathsome, scoundrelly tramp, who has not the sensibilities to measure or to pity the griefs that flow from his diabolism. This insufficiency of motive gives pinchbeck quality to a story, which, in its day, had great admirers—among them the poet Shelley.

Brown's next venture in the way of fiction was the tale of *Arthur Mervyn*—whose scene is laid in those horrific times when the yellow fever devastated Philadelphia and New York. Of the ravages of this scourge Brown had full personal knowledge. He had himself been subject to attack, and had watched over the fatal issue in the case of some of his dearest friends—among them the Dr. Smith to whom I have alluded, and who was the victim of his own determined and self-sacrificing benevolence. Brown's description of the street scenes in Philadelphia are wonderfully vivid, and almost take rank with Defoe's story of the London Plague. I cannot quote anything that will better show his peculiar power than this bit of narrative by one of the personages of the tale:—

“The sun had nearly set before I reached the precincts of the city. . . . Instead of equipages

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and a throng of passengers, the voice of levity and glee, which I had formerly observed, and which the mildness of the season would at other times have produced, I found nothing but a dreary solitude. The market-place, and east side of the magnificent avenue were illuminated by lamps; but between the verge of the Schuylkill and the heart of the city, I met not more than a dozen figures; and these were ghostlike, wrapt in cloaks, from behind which they cast upon me glances of wonder and suspicion; and, as I approached, changed their course to avoid touching me. Their clothes were sprinkled with vinegar; and their nostrils defended from contagion by some powerful perfume. I cast a look upon the houses, which I recollect to have formerly been, at this hour, brilliant with lights, resounding with lively voices, and thronged with busy faces. Now they were closed, above and below, yet dark, and without tokens of being inhabited. From the upper windows of some, a gleam sometimes fell upon the pavement I was traversing, and showed that their tenants had not fled, but were secluded or disabled."

This visitor, after vain appeals at various houses, at last enters one whose door stands open. His knock is unheard; but faint for want of rest he presses on:—

ARTHUR MERVYN

"I mounted the stair. As I approached the room of which I was in search [the window of which had shown a light] a vapor, deadly infectious, assailed my senses. It resembled nothing of which I had ever before been sensible. Many odors had been met with, even since my arrival in the city, less supportable than this. I seemed not so much to smell, as to taste the element that now encompassed me. I felt as if I had inhaled a poisonous subtle fluid, whose power instantly bereft my stomach of all vigor. Some fatal influence seemed to seize upon my vitals, and the work of corrosion and decomposition to be busily begun."

Thereafter follow other scenes, whose details surpass in horrible truthfulness all the newest French expositions of realism. There 's no well-evolved, fairly issuing story, to this fiction of *Arthur Mervyn*; it might stop a hundred pages before it ends; it might trail on its mesh of incidents—of escapes—of assassination—of secret burials—of woe-begone side-stories—for a hundred or two hundred pages in addition, without making us wonder more or satisfying us more. First we have one narrator who occupies us for his score or hundred of pages; then another appears who has *his*

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story to tell; and he in turn meets with mysterious adventures which involve a third narrator; and this one's turn cut short by a fourth, or by the original one reappearing on the scene. Promises of love-episodes are baffled before they are well begun; dangers are escaped only to show the fugitive striding into more terrific perils; lost parchments—stolen moneys—secreted bank-notes—old blood traces—mysterious whisperings at night—hollow-sounding pavements—sulphurous odors—all these abound. And we finish a tale like *Arthur Mervyn* or like *Edgar Huntley*—at least I do—with the same sense of relief and of fatigue with which we might get up from a long and disorderly game of chess—in which the knights had gone on crazy gallops, and the bishops all moved awry—with only a stalemate at the end.

CHAPTER IV

OUR overlong dalliance with the eerie tales of our first novelist—but not the best—and with those wits of Hartford who put the Tories to a Hudibrastic torture, and “hailed Columbia;” and yet further with that preacher-poet who helped Yalensian boys of the close of the last century into straight and manly ways of acting and thinking—these dalliances, I say, have forbidden our keeping even pace with colonial political events and setting up our “mile-stone” record of the same.

Yet while these men—of whose work some details are given in our last chapter—were singing their songs or busy with their teachings or satire, or brooding in the imaginative depths they loved, the new American nationality was evolving under tribulations and battles, and gushes of patriotic oratory. In the very days when Trumbull was sharpening his pen, in a Boston law-office, for work upon *McFingal*, the cousins, John and Samuel Adams, were in

attendance at Philadelphia upon that earliest Colonial Congress (1774) where George Washington put in an appearance in Virginia regimentals, and where Patrick Henry and Randolph made the walls of Independence Hall ring with the echoes of their fervid Americanism. And when Thomas Jefferson (1776) was putting the power of that incisive pen (with which he could lavish picturesqueness on his descriptions of the Shenandoah) to a Declaration of Independence, the poet Barlow was a Sophomore at Yale; and the same poet was up for Deputy to the French Convention from Savoy, when (1793) Washington—his battles all won—had been four years installed as President of a new nation.

The *Federalist* papers—in which Jay, Madison, and Hamilton made reputations as publicists and statesmen—were fresh and pungent (1788) in the eyes and brains of a good many eager readers six years before Dr. Dwight had taken the Presidency of Yale; and long before that old gentleman's death, Hamilton had been killed by Aaron Burr (1804), and John Jay had negotiated the famous treaty with Great Britain (1795), and for six years ensuing had been Governor of New York.

It was in 1789—the year of broiling memo-

EARLY NATURALISTS

ries for French history—that George Washington began—under placid skies—his eight years of Presidency over the United States; John Adams succeeded; and four years thereafter drove away wrathily in his coach—out of pique toward his democratic successor Thomas Jefferson (1801-9). Then came James Madison, a Virginia graduate of the College of New Jersey—within the limits of whose Presidency a new war with England (1812) began and ended. With these lighthouses of date we go back to our quiet talks; first, about some Naturalists.

EARLY NATURALISTS

I HAVE already remarked upon the frequency with which some of the old Pilgrim annalists discoursed upon the trees, birds, and fishes of the new land they had found: some fragments were cited from their pleasant but rather wordy descriptions. Thomas Morton, the adventurer, you will remember, was quite full and graphic in his stories of the beasts and birds of what he called the New Canaan—a Canaan which surely did not flow with milk and honey for him.

It was not till much later, however, that such

descriptions of natural objects began to have an accuracy—based on minute knowledge—which gave them permanent value. Old John Bartram,¹ the Quaker farmer of Pennsylvania, was the first native to establish a botanic garden—which he did upon his lands on the banks of the Schuylkill; and, if I am not mistaken, there are traces still left of the Bartram plantings, and of the old Bartram mansion—over one of whose windows he had engraven:—

“ ‘T is God alone, th’ Almighty Lord,
The holy one by me adored.”

He was correspondent of Linnæus—a friend of Dr. Franklin’s, and left a son, William Bartram, also well known as naturalist, and better instructed. John Mitchell, a physician of English birth, but long established in the neighborhood of Richmond, Va., was a zealous botanist, wrote a Latin tractate on the subject of his studies, with notices of the *Flora of Virginia*, and wears the honor of having given name to the pretty little evergreen trailing flower of our hillsides known as the partridge berry, or *Mitchella repens*.

¹ John Bartram, b. 1699; d. 1777. William (his son), b. 1739; d. 1823. He wrote *Memoirs of John Bartram*, also a full and very early *List of American Birds*.

ALEXANDER WILSON

The two Michaux¹ (André and François André), though of French birth, should be named among those who very early contributed to a knowledge of our forest growths—the elder of these having established two great nurseries, and the younger (François) being author of that still well-accredited and important work known as the *North American Silva*.

ALEXANDER WILSON

BUT it was only when Alexander Wilson² found his way to this country from Scotland, toward the close of the last century, that we had a naturalist whose name finds a permanent enrolment with American literary folk. Wilson was humbly born, near to Paisley—but he was of strong poetic instincts, which bubbled out into frequent songs from intervals in his weaver's labor; he took also to the peddling craft, for enjoyment of the woody beauties of Dumfries-shire, and nearer intercourse with

¹ André, b. 1746; d. (in Madagascar) 1802. The son, François André, b. 1770; d. 1855. *North American Silva*, 4 vols., 1817-19. Supplementary vols. by Nuttal, 1842-49.

² Alexander Wilson, b. 1766; d. 1813. His *American Ornithology*, 1808-14.

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the birds and the trees. He commended his wares even in poetic broadsides, and dealt not ungraciously with Scottish dialect at a time when Burns was singing: indeed his longest dialect poem was for some time attributed to Burns—only by the unwary, however. 'T is hard to listen contentedly to the chirping of a sparrow, when a thrush (like Burns) fills the air with melody. But Wilson's verses, written on this side of the water, after he had made a tramp across the Alleghanies, are not to be scorned, and are without the grossness which belongs to many of his dialect poems. He laments that nature's charms in America are unheralded:—

“While bare black heaths and brooks of half a mile
Can rouse the thousand bards of Britain's Isle;
There scarce a stream creeps down its narrow bed,
There scarce a hillock lifts its little head,
Or humble hamlet peeps their glades among
But lives and murmurs in immortal song.”

His pictures of the forest are full of woodsy flavors, and have a fairish evenness of line. So, too, his little rhyming glimpses of bird-habits are exceedingly pretty, and as true as

WILSON AND AUDUBON

they are pretty. Thus of the Baltimore Oriole:—

“The broad extended boughs still please him best,
Beneath their bending skirts he hangs his nest.”

And again of the humming-bird:—

“The richest roses, tho’ crimson drest,
Shrink from the splendor of his gorgeous breast:
What heavenly tints in mingling radiance fly,
Each rapid movement gives a different dye:
Like scales of burnish’d gold they dazzling show,
Now sink to shade—now like a furnace glow.”

Ambitious prose-writers will hardly make a better description of this little flitting wonder of the honeysuckles. Poor Wilson, with all his poetic and observing aptitudes had a hard time of it; one while schoolmaster in a country district on the Schuylkill; again tramping through the forests that fringe the Ontario; hunting high and low for new and strange feathered things; and hunting—with even worse success—for subscribers to his book on birds: but he is kept alive and hopeful by wondrous enthusiasms. It was in one of his journeyings along the Ohio, when he had his prospectus and pictures to show, that he encountered John James Audubon—at that time

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engaged in one of his futile attempts at merchandising, in Louisville, Ky. It would seem that Audubon was as much amazed by the pictures and knowledge of Wilson, as Wilson was by the knowledge and superior skill of Audubon. It was natural, perhaps, that with two such enthusiasts in one line of work jealousies should have started— jealousies which were unfortunately fostered by injudicious friends—and no helpful sympathy ever grew up between them.

AUDUBON

AT that date Audubon had not yet forecast his great folio on the birds of North America. Unlike Wilson, he had been reared in luxury: born in Louisiana,¹ of a French father, who was in the French navy, and of a mother who was of Spanish blood—changes, adventures, perils, losses, and sufferings had belonged to him all his life. As a boy he had wandered under the tropic tangles of San Domingo; and his mother losing her life there in a negro insurrection—he had gone to Paris—had been

¹ John James Audubon, b. 1780; d. 1851. *The Birds of America*, 1830-38. *Biography* (by Mme. Audubon), published in 1868.

AUDUBON

taught art in the study of the great David ; had gone thence to a country place of his father on the Schuylkill ; had astonished the natives thereabout with his French graces, his satin short-clothes, his hyacinthine locks ; had made conquest of the charming daughter of an English neighbor—Bakewell ; had been counselled by his future father-in-law to lay the basis of an assured future by going into trade ; had gone into trade, and had miserably failed in it ; had allowed a fortune left by his father to slip through his slippery, generous, and most impracticable fingers ; had married ; had kept alive all his naturalistic love—begun in the tropics ; had made his country-house on the Schuylkill a museum of most beautiful, unsalable things ; had tried a venture at milling—and failed ; merchandising again—and failed ; his partners all riddled him ; his friends all loved him, and the birds all sang to him. He yearned for money—but only to spend it ; to spend it on home luxuries and on the first interesting poor man he might encounter. He was full of endurance, capable of all manner of fatigues ; could tramp through swamps or forests, or swim rivers in his bird-hunts. He had an ineffaceable love for the picturesque ; would never set up a heron or a hawk (which he

stuffed with consummate skill) save in the most picturesque of attitudes; and was as insistent upon the picturesque in his own hair, his hat, his small-clothes, or his jerkin. But in those early days of our nationality it did not pay to be picturesque; 't is doubtful if it does now. Finding his domestic livelihood imperilled, he taught drawing, took portraits, taught music, taught dancing even; and there are stories of his amazing a great assemblage of young Mississippians (at Natchez, I think) with his flamboyant graces in the ball-room—fiddle-bow in hand—and with locks and toilette of last Parisian *chic*. His wife, a woman of most admirable prudence and sagacity, was always a governing balance-wheel; and it was largely through her wise savings and her urgency, that he started for England to negotiate for the publication of those amazingly life-like bird-pictures which had been growing in number year by year in his portfolio, and which are now, and always will be, so honorably associated with the name of the great naturalist.

He was most flatteringly received, and subscriptions to his book—at \$1,000 a copy—were not wanting among the magnates of Great Britain.

AUDUBON

An entry in his diary on that English visit says:—

“Busy to-day painting two cats fighting over a squirrel. I expect to visit the Duke of Northumberland, who has promised to subscribe. I have taken to dressing again—twice a day, and wear silk stockings and pumps. I wear my hair as long as usual; I believe it does as much for me as my painting. I am feted, feasted, elected honorary member of various societies—making money by my exhibition of my paintings. Dined the other day with Captain Basil Hall, and met Francis Jeffrey: in the course of the evening Jeffrey seemed to discover that if he was Jeffrey, I was Audubon.”

In France, however, he meets disappointment:—

“Poor France,” he says—“thy fine climate, rich vineyards, and the wishes of the learned avail nothing. Thou art a destitute beggar, and not the powerful friend thou art represented to me.

“Not a subscriber—Lucy—[he is writing to his wife], no—not one!”

At Edinburgh, somewhat later, he is advised for reasons of policy to have his hair

cut off: he consents, but memorializes the loss by a diary entry—with broad black border:—

“This day my hair was sacrificed. . . . As the barber clipped my locks rapidly, it reminded me of the horrible times of the French Revolution when the same operation was performed upon all the victims murdered by the guillotine. My heart sank low.”

The portrait would not be complete without showing these little touches of vanity in the great naturalist; but there are many soberer and better things, and always interesting things, throughout his diary and letters. We are brought into contact with many of the great scientists and patrons of learning in England and France: we have details of rare adventures—of escapes from flood—from assassination; we track great rivers, through pathless woods; we see camp-fires blazing in the wilds, and the crack of his rifle is only the prelude to some such picture of a bird as makes the bird forever familiar.

Audubon lived almost into our time: days were brighter for him toward the close of his life; his great *Birds of America* (costing \$100,000 in its execution) was a success; his

NEWSPAPERS

sons were doing excellent work in similar lines; a country-house upon the banks of the Hudson, near to New York—in an ancient wood (the site now known as Audubon Park), made for him a luxurious home. And it was singularly fitting that he—who insisted upon mounting his eagles or his herons with surroundings that should tell of their marshes or rocky fastnesses—should himself be put to rest, near to the flow of a noble river, and with great forest growth—that invited the birds—stretching its boughs over him.

FIRST NEWSPAPERS

WITHIN the limits set for these talks 't is not possible to say what might be well said, upon the connection of the newspapers with the development of American literary spirit. The first show of journalism was naturally in Boston, and in a little sheet, eleven inches by seven, headed *Public Occurrences*, and only monthly in issue. Thereafter came (1704) the *Boston News Letter*, a weekly, commended specially to all persons who "had houses, lands, farms to be sold or let, or who had servants run away or goods stolen," that they might have the same inserted at "reasonable rates." Under

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news appeared such items as these: "Rev. Mr. Pemberton preach'd an excellent sermon on the 20th, on 1 Thess. 4-11," or "The Adventure, a vessel of 60 tons, will sail from New London to the Thames in 3 weeks, or a month's time." Marriages were not mentioned; deaths rarely; and in 1719 there was a circulation of scarce three hundred. But when rivals started frequent items crept in. The Franklin family had its swing at journalism in Boston, and again in Philadelphia; one of that family, as we have seen, knew how to invest his paragraphs with literary quality. The Sons of Liberty, when fairly waked with such chorister as Samuel Adams, made the newspapers ring with something louder and worthier than the old "Public Occurrences." The Hartford Wits all plumed themselves for larger flights in the newspapers of Connecticut. Philip Freneau,¹ the poet of New York, became journalist by profession: a little season of captivity on the old Jersey prison-ship sharpened his satire, and he might be easily reckoned hero of his own poem of *The Country Printer*, who—

"With press and pen attack'd the royal side,
Did what he could to pull their Lion down,

¹ Freneau, b. 1752; d. 1832.

PHILIP FRENEAU

Clipp'd at his beard, and twitched his sacred hide
Mimick'd his roarings, trod upon his toes,
Pelted young whelps, and tweak'd the old one's
nose.

Roused by his page, at church or court-house
read,

From depths of wood the willing rustics ran
Now by a priest, and now some deacon led,
With clubs and spits to guard the rights of
man.”

But Freneau could do much better things than this; and many of his forgotten poems show high imaginative range—touching the landscape (where it appears) with rare tact and grace. He was of Huguenot blood, born in Frankfort Street, New York—was fellow with Madison at Nassau Hall, had early seafaring experiences—was extreme in French radical sympathies (catching thereby the objurgations of Washington)—an eager, impulsive person; capable of bitter speeches; capable, too, of tender poetic fancies—as when he wanders among Indian graves:

“By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In vestments for the chace arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer—a shade.”

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British interests had their champion in Rivington's old New York *Gazetteer*, which, up to Evacuation-day, thundered its anathemas and its pleasant pasquinades upon the rebels: poor André was a poetic contributor; and the last canto of his satire of the *Cow-Chase* was printed in Rivington's *Gazetteer* on the very day of that capture at Tarrytown which brought him to the gallows; a quatrain of this closing part of the satire runs thus:

“And now I 've closed my epic strain,
I tremble as I show it,
Lest this same warrior-drover Wayne
Should ever catch the poet.”

Rivington was himself a man of parts—had been stationer, jockey, racing-man in England—a high-liver, jolly companion, but unscrupulous; and it was believed in the last year of the war was under pay of Washington, and virtually a spy upon British movements. He loved theatriics, and his capacity as actor on one occasion at least served him a good turn. The bluff old General Ethan Allen, inflamed by some lampoons in the *Gazetteer*, had vowed to administer a thrashing to its editor, and one day appeared in the hallway in his rusty regiments; the scared servant ran up to announce

ROYALL TYLER

the terrible visitor, whose long sword was presently heard clanking on the stairs.

Rivington was finishing his dinner with a decanter of Madeira, when the indignant Vermonter appeared; before the visitor could make speech however, the courteous Rivington stepped forward, grasped his hand, assured him of the pleasure it gave him to meet a gentleman of his distinction, and begged that whatever his business might be, it should wait upon a glass of old Madeira. The dazed General—not hardened against such ruby enticement, took his glass—smacked his lips;—then another, and another—Rivington plying him with delicate art—until a second bottle was nearly gone, and the General, in too happy a mood for any more serious task than that of finding his way home; which he did with sword clanking on the stairs—somewhat more spasmodically.

ROYALL TYLER

AN equally notable newspaper man—on the patriotic side—and far worthier than Rivington, was Isaiah Thomas,¹ who published the

¹ Isaiah Thomas, b. 1749; d. 1831. *History of Printing.* 2 vols. 8vo. Worcester: 1810.

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Spy in Boston, and afterward (when his Whigism grew rampant) in Worcester—where a successor to the *Spy* is still issued, and where an Antiquarian Hall—under auspices of a society founded by the same Thomas—still flourishes. Besides the *Spy*, this patriotic journalist was concerned in establishing a *Farmers' Museum* in the town of Walpole, N. H., which paper is associated with two or three of the early literary reputations of New England men. Chiefest among them was Royall Tyler¹—the wittiest journalist of his day—an earlier and coarse Wendell Holmes—who became eventually Chief-Justice of Vermont. He also wrote the first play acted on the public stage in America, and was among the earliest to splice out the interest of broad comedy with Yankee dialect.

His Jonathan—of the dialect—is represented as dropping into a theatre on a visit to New York, and sitting out an old English play (I think the “School for Scandal”). On being questioned about the acting:—

“Why, I vow,” says he, “as I was waiting for the actors, they lifted up a green cloth and let us look right into the next-door neighbor’s room. Have ye a good many houses in York made in

¹ Royall Tyler, b. 1758; d. 1826.

COLON & SPONDEE

that 'ere way? . . . Dogs a bit of a show have I seen 'less you call listenin' to folks' private business, a show!"

This Royall Tyler had also, in that old *Farmers' Museum*—very much to say of the firm of Colon & Spondee—represented as—

"Wholesale Dealers in Verse, Prose, and Music, who give notice that they will expose for sale—Salutatory and Valedictory Orations—Syllogistic and Forensic disputation—Hebrew roots and other simples—Dead languages for living Drones—Doric and Eolic dialects, with the Onondaga and Mohawk gutturals. . . . Serenades for nocturnal Lovers. . . . Classic college bows, clear starched, lately imported from Cambridge, and now used by all the topping Scientific connoisseurs in hair and wigs in this country. [And in postscript] : Cash and highest price given for Rare wit for the use of the Manufactory, or taken in Exchange for the above articles."

Of the sort of poems furnished by Messrs. Colon & Spondee we have a hint in certain lines for Independence Day, which had great vogue:—

"Squeak the fife and beat the drum,
Independence Day is come;

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Let the roasting pig be bled ;
Quick twist off the cockerell's head :

• • • •
Sal put on your russet skirt,
Jotham, get your boughten shirt,
To-day we dance to tiddle-diddle,
Here comes Sambo with his fiddle.

• • • •
Come, foot it *Sal—Moll* figure in,
And mother, you dance up to him.

• • • •
Rub more rosin on your bow
And let us have another go.
Zounds ! as sure as eggs and bacon
Here 's Ensign Sneak and Uncle Deacon.

• • • •
And there 's the Squire, too, and his lady.
Sal, hold the beast, I 'll take the baby ;
Moll, bring the Squire our great arm-chair.
Good folks, we 're glad to see you here ;
Jotham, get the great case-bottle,
Your teeth can pull its corn-cob stopple.

• • • •
Thus we drink and dance away
On glorious Independence Day !"

This is written in the full spirit of the noisy jollities that belonged to old Fourth of July in the country districts of New England ; it is

FENIMORE COOPER

typical also of the humorsome side of our patriotic literature at the close of the last century; and we should relish it the more as coming from the pen of a man who in 1800 was elected Chief-Justice of Vermont.

ANOTHER NOVELIST

Two years after that date, *i.e.*, in 1802, when Noah Webster—not long removed from Hartford—was working at an American Dictionary of the English Language, in Temple Street, New Haven—when Joel Barlow was revising his *Columbiad* and closing up his Paris speculations—when Robert Fulton was experimenting with his steamboat—when Tom Paine was on his way back from France to New Rochelle—when Royall Tyler was declaring justice and judgment in Vermont—when John Adams (in the sulks) had just given up the Presidency to Thomas Jefferson, and when Brockden Brown, encouraged by the success of his *Arthur Mervyn*, was preparing to issue a literary magazine in Philadelphia—there entered at Yale, in the second term of Freshman year, a young lad of thirteen, who had passed much of his boyhood in a border settlement among forests—who had prepared for college with an

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English Churchman at Albany, and who (though the youngest in his class) took his prescribed studies easily;—so easily, in fact, and with such waywardness in his courses—whether athletic or ethical—that before Junior year was ended, he received his dismission at the hands of President Dwight.

His father being member of Congress, large landholder, and otherwise important, came to argue for a stay of faculty proceedings—but vainly; and the lad, then fifteen, took his rustication by going to sea. Twenty years after, he was known all over Europe and America by the stories he had written about Leather-stock-ing and Tom Coffin. Fortunately we have an excellent biographer of Cooper ¹—in Professor Lounsbury, who shows a charming inaptitude for being overawed by professional critics; and he has made the book, in a degree beyond most current biographies—honest, searching and fair. I can imagine, indeed, that some close friends of Mr. Cooper, if they were to come to life, would quarrel a little with the way in which this record exhibits some of the novelist's crankiness and perverseness; but—on the other hand—his sturdy masculine honesty—his straightforward intentions—his superb

¹ James Fenimore Cooper, b. 1789; d. 1851.

J. FENIMORE COOPER

fearlessness of issues, are set forth in a way to kindle respect where respect was never kindled before, and to make Americans recognize a man of stiff, serious, well-directed purposes, and of large mental endowments.

It was a great, pleasant, country home where Cooper passed much of his boyhood—on the borders of Otsego Lake, with the hills all around clad in forests—very green and cooling in the summer heats, and marvellous in their beauty when the frosts fell, and the wood-chopper's axe or the hunter's rifle alone broke the autumn silences. It is not to be wondered at that a pride in his American inheritance should cling by him and not be driven out by London experiences—when he landed there from his forecastle berth in the ship *Sterling*, and went upon his round of “sights” in the great metropolis. It is likely enough, too, that with his combative nature—the memory of his English Church tutor's prescriptions regarding duty and honor—arrogantly pressed—may have rankled in him, and set him upon certain anti-British ways of thinking, which kept by him always. Certain it is that his fresh, lusty Americanism did not get any set-back from his first visitings abroad. His “before-the-mast” service was a sort of preparatory step to the

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berth of a midshipman in the navy, which he secured in 1808 (just two years after his Yale classmates were graduating), and in 1809 he was ordered to Lake Ontario, to superintend the construction of a war-boat there (a war with England threatening at that time). And it was on this trip and service that he took into his mind those large forest landscapes which throw their shadows so wonderfully athwart the pages of *The Pathfinder*.

In the matter of his marriage—as in his college career—he took the bit in his mouth; and in 1811—counter to the advices of some sage, elderly folk—he became the husband of Miss De Lancey; she nineteen—he twenty-one. It proved one of the happiest of marriages: no scandals ever came within his house-walls; and if there were bickerings, they were never loud enough to disturb greatly the average orderly quietude of his domesticities. The family into which Cooper married had been on the Royalist side during the war; and when he went down in his courting days, or after marriage, to that part of Westchester County—between Mamaroneck and Scarsdale—where the De Lanceys had lived, he was brought into close and lively contact with those scenes of the neutral ground—and those stories of the war-



J. Fenimore Cooper
From an engraving by J. B. Forrest after a daguerreotype

COOPER'S SPY

times—which found setting later in the first book that brought him fame—*The Spy*.¹

THE SPY AND PIONEERS

YOUNG Americans ought to have relish for a reading of *The Spy*. Washington appears in a shadowy fashion in it; so do many of the campaign leaders—on either side—under new names; pretty Scarsdale landscapes are lighted with sunshine; warm interiors are brightened with sparkling fire-play, and give echo to social discourse. I say discourse, rather than prattle, because Cooper—strong as he was in many ways of conducting a story—never conquered the art of putting lively prattle upon paper. There is too much talking, of his superior characters—whether male or female—in a large General-Washington strain. But the talk he puts in the mouths of subordinates, or half-educated people, is flowing and to the point. His parlor chit-chat, on the other hand, is forced, stiff, labored, with an indescribable twang—of what a country school-mistress might term the “genteel.” But one overlooks

¹ Published in 1821. An earlier book, and a dreary one, called *Precaution*, dates from the same year.

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this, and forgets "gentilities" in such a novel as *The Spy*. There are, indeed, love-passages—romantic indoor plots and counter-plots—in which lovers in epaulettes are British, and young women are patriots, or contrariwise; and there are the heart-rending separations, and the inevitable billings and cooings. But all these vanish away—as under a strong wind, when the real hero challenges attention, with his hair-breadth escapes, his self-immolation, his transparent honesty—glossed over by some mysterious secret.

I can recall even now, the first school-day reading of that story of the neutral ground, which held me in thrall for days afterward—picturing and repicturing the scene of Harvey Birch's escape with the young British officer, from the scaffold. One follows breathlessly the putting on of the disguises—the trepidation of the old negro, left in durance—the stealing out, almost under shadow of the gallows—the nervous and repeated watch, from the high road, of the dragoon who tightens his girths—the warning to the companion to go slow, lest suspicion be roused—the deliberate, cautious progress into the edge of the wood—the passing comments upon the indications that meet their view about the quarters from which they

COOPER'S SPY

are escaping; and at last, the terrible evidence coming to light that their plot is discovered; then comes the hurry of the orderlies—the mounting of the dragoons; all the while the sun beating warmly upon the Westchester heights, where they are toiling on their track; at last, with good leeway at command, and no other hope promising, they fling away all disguises, in full sight of the mounting troopers, and make a bold, swift dash for the fastnesses of the hills.

That *Spy* made the groundwork of Cooper's fame in this country, in England, and on the Continent. There were men who modelled their lives on lines traceable in the career of Harvey Birch, and were proud to do it. His devotion, his trueness to the cause he loved and served—his modesty, his strength of purpose, his self-effacement made up the preaching of a good moral sermon; none the less effective because his story was founded upon actual occurrences detailed to Mr. Cooper by his host, upon the occasion of some visit to the Jay home-stead in Westchester.

I note the further fact, in connection with *The Spy*, that it was written far more hastily, and with much less of deliberation and forecast than the preceding unpopular story of *Precau-*

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tion. So little considered indeed was it in respect of proportion, that when his publisher expressed a fear that it might overrun bounds in length, Cooper wrote the final chapters with a conclusion, and sent them to the printer, to be set up and paged in advance of the rest—he engaging to fill in the gap at his leisure. This does not mean that you and I can write sufficiently good chapters in a novel between breakfast and dinner without many preliminary anxieties; but it does mean that a literary artist, like Cooper, looking out only for broad, bold effects, and who is already possessed of the *animus* of his story, and has before him a definite issue, can be, in a measure, careless of details and of the fillings-in. There are writers to whom the details are everything; and to whom elaborate finish, happy turns of expression, illustrative streaks of humor, give largest value and most consequence. With Cooper 't is far otherwise; there 's little finish, there 's no humor; no ingenious turn of a sentence or a thought brings you to pause—either to weigh it or enjoy it. He is making his way to some dramatic end by bold, broad dashes of descriptive color, which he may multiply or vary with tedious divergencies, without spoiling his main chance. Hence there is no Amer-

COOPER'S INDIANS

ican author, scarce any popular author, who loses so little by translation. The charm that lies in light, graceful play of language about trifles is unknown to him.

The Spy was followed (1823) by *The Pioneers*. In this story Leather-stockings comes to the front, but not as a character of large importance; in this, too, appear the first raw sketches of those Indians of whom he was to make so much in the better stories of *The Pathfinder* and *The Last of the Mohicans*. The Indians of Cooper are not like those of Brockden Brown—mere streaks of red and of savagery upon the page; glimmerings of kindlier humanities shine through them. Perhaps the idealizing process is a little strained; certainly the poetic tendencies in Cooper's nature never took more buoyant or easier flight than when he put voice to the rhapsodies of an Uncas or a Chingachgook; and as Scott has given to the imaginations of the English reading world a *Cœur de Lion*, distained of his brutalities (who holds place, in spite of the wrathful disapprovals of sharp-eyed historians), so Cooper has given us all a notion—exaggerated, but fast and sure—of the capabilities, and better reaches of the savage nature, which it is well to leave undisturbed as a good make-

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weight against the bloody allegations of too many Government agents.

Take for instance that impassioned story of the Judgment of Tamenund—in *The Last of the Mohicans*—where the lithe, self-possessed, proud young warrior, Uncas, confronts his accusers, and in voice like a bugle-note, gives burst to the chivalrous spirit which has come to him through a proud ancestry—tracing back to the great Father of Spirits: strained it may be; but the strain is in good direction—and like an old sacred picture of daring and high endeavor—over-colored by poetic exaltations of touch—is yet inspiring and good to have, and to cherish.

In *The Pioneers*—which I recur to—not because it is one of Cooper's cleverest books, but because he himself took special pride in it, and because its landscapes, which trail—rather wearisomely at times—over its opening pages are the landscapes he knew as a boy. He had strong relish for its presentment of a great ancestral estate, and of a hall smoking with feasts. With all his insistent and belligerent democratic spirit, he had a weakness for “family,” and heirlooms; treasured a grandfather's portrait or a mouldy parchment setting forth

THE PIONEERS

titles, more than most Americans. And it was the assertion of this pride of blood, and the petulance that grew out of affronts to it which did very much to launch him among those broils and antagonisms that embittered the latter half of his life. It was a princely estate that his father had held about the head-waters of the Susquehanna; thousands of acres of mountain land, covered by the original forest growth, and criss-crossed with paths by the deer, lay about the valley, in which—with intervals of corn-ground and of meadow—shone the placid stretch of Otsego Lake. The white footfalls of civilization have fallen pretty thickly thereabout now; but enough of rural surroundings are still left to make one's estimate of the reach of the old Temple domain very clear; and it is easy to fancy Miss Temple, with her friend, and the stout mastiff Brave strolling away into woodlands, and encountering the ferocious beast of which the swift, short story made one of the vivid and popular episodes of *The Pioneers*.

I give a fragment of this as showing Cooper's manner in dealing with the wilds. The dog had given the terrified women warning of the presence of a panther:—

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“A quarter-grown cub, that had hitherto been unseen, now appeared dropping from a sapling that grew under the shade of the beech which held its dam. This ignorant but vicious [little] creature, approached the dog, imitating the actions and sounds of its parent. . . . Standing on its hind legs, it would rend the bark of a tree with its forepaws, and play the antics of a cat, and then by lashing itself with its tail, and growling, and scratching the earth, it would attempt the manifestations of anger that rendered its parent so terrific. All the time Brave stood firm and undaunted, his short tail erect, his body drawn backward on his haunches, and his eye following the movements of both dam and cub. At every gambol played by the latter, it approached nigher to the dog, the growling of the three becoming more horrid at each moment, until the younger beast, overleaping its intended bound, fell directly before the mastiff. There was a moment of fearful cries and struggles, but they ended almost as soon as they commenced, by the cub appearing in the air, hurled from the jaws of Brave, and (hung against a tree) with a violence that rendered it senseless.

“Elizabeth (trembling) witnessed the struggle, and her blood was warming with the triumph of the dog, when she saw the form of the old panther in the air, springing twenty feet from the beech-tree to the back of the mastiff. No words

THE PIONEERS

can describe the fury of the conflict that followed. . . . So rapid and vigorous were the bounds of the inhabitant of the forest that its active frame seemed constantly in the air, while the dog nobly faced his foe at each successive leap. When the panther lighted on the shoulders of the mastiff, which was its constant aim, old Brave, tho' torn with her talons, and stained with his own blood that flowed from a dozen wounds, would shake off his furious foe like a feather, with jaws distended and dauntless eye. But age and his pampered life greatly disqualified the noble mastiff for such a struggle. . . .

“Several mighty efforts of the wild cat to extricate herself from the jaws of the dog followed, but they were fruitless, until the mastiff turned on his back, his lips collapsed, his teeth loosened, and the short convulsions that succeeded announced the death of poor Brave.

“Elizabeth now lay wholly at the mercy of the beast. The eyes of the monster and the kneeling maiden met for an instant.

• • • • • • •
“ ‘Hist—hist!’ said a low voice: ‘Stoop lower, gal! your bonnet hides the creatur’s head:’ ” [and a whizzing bullet from the rifle of Leatherstocking closes the conflict and the danger.]

The Last of the Mohicans, after one has scrambled through its somewhat wearisome

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opening, is full of even livelier pictures of great dangers and escapes. But *The Pioneers*, notwithstanding its graphic episodes, and a certain aromatic odor of the forests drifting through its later pages, has big chasms of indoor prolixity and dulness; and if such averment be not too unchivalric, one might say that a good deal of the dulness is due to the Miss Temples and Louisas we encounter. Cooper's women are never up to the level of his men; and his wildest men and unkempt ones are always better than his tame ones, who—by a fiction—are supposed to wear the graces of civilization. As for the women—young or old—those graces of civilization go to smother them sadly. They mean well; they have good figures; they talk with propriety; they think only proprieties; they are gentle; they have—he tells us—beautiful eyes—beautiful hands may be—musical voices, very likely; they are women we should unfailingly entertain a high regard for; women we should lift our hats to, with a respect that would be unctious in quality; virtuous and correct young women—fairly intelligent young women; but *not* vivacious—not piquant; young women with whom—if it came to a matter of talk and of entertaining,

COOPER'S SEA-STORIES

or being entertained, we should be smitten with a desire—to slip into the next room.

SEA-STORIES AND OTHERS

SURELY it is not under a bonnet or behind a fan that we must look for Cooper's best work, but in his sea-tales;—in the Tom Coffins and the Barnstables, he is all himself. In these we have the ease, the force, the naturalness, which, in the lines of his forest work, distinguish his borderers and huntsmen. Yet further it is to be noted that—beyond and around his human characters—it is the Ocean that is alive, and under his handling the ships are live things. You feel the scuds of brine smiting your cheek, and the deck lifting and careering under you.

“ ‘ ‘T is a perilous thing,’ says the captain, ‘ to loosen canvas in such a tempest.’ ”

“ ‘It must be done,’ says the mysterious pilot.

“There was a moment when the result was doubtful; the tremendous threshing of the heavy sails seeming to bid defiance to all restraint—shaking the ship to her centre.

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“‘She feels it, she springs her luff,’ said the pilot. A report like that of a cannon interrupted him. . . . ‘T was the jib blown from the bolt-ropes; but the mainsail would laugh at a tornado; yet the mast springs like a piece of steel.

“Twenty times, as the foam rolled away to leeward the crew were on the eve of uttering their joy, as they supposed danger was over; but breaker after breaker would still rise before them —following each other into the general mass.

“At length the ship reached a point where she appeared to be rushing directly into the jaws of destruction. . . . At the same instant the voice of the pilot shouted—‘Square away the yards!—in mainsail!’ A burst from the crew echoed—‘Square away the yards!’ and quick as thought the frigate was gliding along the Channel before the wind. The eye had hardly time to dwell on the foam, which seemed like clouds driving in the heavens; and directly the gallant vessel issued from her perils, and rose and fell on the heavy waves of the open sea.”

It’s next to being on the ocean to read such descriptions of straits and tempests as that. And it is next to being one’s self a party to a sea-battle to watch Tom Coffin—begrimed with powder—train his long gun, and see the

HOME AS FOUND

white smoke and tongue of fire leap from the muzzle. Indeed, there is no stay, no prolixity, no dulness, when once Cooper has us fairly off shore. And his sailor's talk unfailingly brings to mind odors of tar and the uneasy swaying of ship's decks.

There are books of Cooper's not to be largely commended—such as *Home as Found*, which is full of impertinences, and insult almost, for those who cherish a lusty and bumptious American sentiment. Up to the date of his leave-taking (1826) for seven years' residence in Europe, Cooper was in highest favor at home; he had been fêted before sailing; his name was a boast. In Europe—specially on the Continent, where he mostly resided—he was received with great consideration; his intercourse was much with people of distinction; his books were known and relished; and he was a man to enjoy largely his reputation and the good things it brought him. Meantime, his pen was not idle; but the new books—many of them—were not equal to the old. American critics said as much—in a way not agreeable to the somewhat arrogant, but closely observing man, who was qualifying himself by his new experiences and training (as he believed) to teach Americans many lessons they did not

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know—about society, manners, politics—to say nothing of literary arts.

The consequence was that when Mr. Cooper returned in 1833, without meeting any such burst of welcome as had greeted Irving on his return the year before; and when he began shortly thereafter to scold his countrymen—in schoolmaster fashion—about their lapses from good breeding, and their lack of social independence, and their subserviency to British influences (much of which was solemnly true), the newspaper people lost their tempers and abused him loudly and continuously. This was irritating to a man who honestly believed himself better equipped to instruct and amuse his countrymen than ever before. And the irritation put him in mood to be watchful for fresh sources of discontent. These came pretty abundantly when—after planting himself in his old remodelled home of Otsego Hall—there sprung up a fierce quarrel with his village neighbors in respect to ownership of a tongue of woodland which shot into the lake, and which had long been used as a public resort. The legal rights were with Cooper; but popular feeling all against him. What the people lacked in rights they made up in abuse; and what the author lacked in sympathy he

COOPER IN THE COURTS

made up in ill-temper. The quarrel had wide echoes; slanders and libel suits ensued; Cooper winning in the courts, and losing—out of court.

He professed indifference to opinion; but there's no doubt his sensitiveness suffered grievously under attack—a fact which quickened the appetites of his more abusive critics; his very sensitiveness making him an enjoyable delicacy—just as we prefer crunching a soft-shell crab to any dealings with a hard shell.

The whole story of the lawsuits is a pitiful one; nor was Cooper sustained by a multiplication of his friendships; death had removed many of his old messmates; new ones were not attracted by a man who professed contempt for opinion. Of New Englandism he had been always shy—affecting disdain for those of New England antecedents—perhaps moved thereto by his Yale miscarriage, or, more likely, by the aggressive churchmanship he always maintained, and which, in those times, held itself up against New England Congregationalism—very much as a blooded bull-terrier confronts a stout, surly house-dog of bigger shape but of shorter lineage.

Moreover, Cooper's residence in the country

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—which he loved—held him aloof from town festivities; his intimacies with prominent literary men were not pronounced or numerous.

LATER YEARS AND DEATH

IN his later years—when the smoke and ill odors of the newspaper battling were over—Cooper did much excellent literary work; and some of his latter stories, where the sea tumbled again with the old yeasty fringes, challenged new companies of readers, and a kindlier spirit grew upon him.

It was between 1847 and 1850 that—on one or two occasions, I caught sight of the author strolling along Broadway—somewhere between Cortlandt and Chambers Street—a heavy, stalwart man, with a little of the sailor swing in his gait, and an unmistakable air of consequence—as of one who had played his part, and a somewhat noisy and important part, in the game of life.

But any possible saunterings on New York streets grew more and more infrequent. He loved, with ever-increasing tenderness, the kindly domesticities and endearments of his home; delved among his woods with a return of boyish interests in the fields, and an old

COOPER'S LAST YEARS

man's yearning for the solemn shadows of the trees.

In 1850 his old friend Dr. Francis—whose friendship dated back to the “Bread and Cheese Club,” formed in the twenties—was summoned professionally to Cooperstown, but no skill could save him. In September of 1851 he died peacefully in the quiet of his own home, with only his immediate family about him. The news saddened many; and of many more the vision was cleared, and they felt for the first time that a man of whom America might be proud had fallen away from the ranks.

A few days after his death, at an informal meeting in the City Hall, New York (Washington Irving presiding), a committee of gentlemen was appointed to take steps for the establishment of some permanent memorial to Cooper; and I am sharply reminded of the flight of time, and of the harvest death has since been reaping, when I observe that out of that committee of twenty-seven (of which the writer chanced to be one) only two now survive.

All that came of the labors of the committee was the organization of a monster public meeting in the old Metropolitan Hall, New York,

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over which Daniel Webster presided, and before which the poet Bryant delivered a eulogy. It was an occasion not to be forgotten by those present. The great hall crowded; the huge platform packed with men known for some good work in some walk of life; more noticeable perhaps than any was Washington Irving, rarely seen in any public assemblage; tremulous now with the infirmities of age, and with the modesties that always interfered with performance of a public duty, yet quietly calling the assemblage to order, and proposing Daniel Webster as chairman for the evening. Then the great orator came forward, and his ponderous, measured tones rolled away into the farthest skirts of the hall as he stated the objects of the meeting and recounted the nation's indebtedness to the dead author.¹

Bryant's memorial address, pronounced in his clear, penetrating voice—a little overstrained by the exactions of the great hall—had all his precision of language, his eloquence, his niceties; without gush, or very much of

¹ The biographer, Professor Lounsbury, is inclined to doubt if Webster had ever read a book of Cooper's; but upon the authority of one who shared the great lawyer's fishing bouts in the Marshpee country, I have reason to say that Mr. Webster loved Cooper's Leather-stockings and his ways, as no good woodsman and angler could fail to do.

MEMORIAL TO COOPER

warmth—for these things, he was inapt by nature.

Mr. G. P. R. James—then chancing to be a visitor in New York—lent a little of his rambling heroics to the interest of the occasion. Dr. Francis L. Hawks (the well-known rector of Calvary), with firmly knit, compact figure, flashing eyes, and a tropical passionateness of utterance, brought his tribute to the dead master; and after him came the high falsetto notes and gorgeous eulogism of the historian Bancroft. At the close of the evening the great imposing figure of Webster lifted again; and it is impossible to forget the deliberate, massive tones with which he made his summing up:—

“You all remember (he said) the eloquent and ingenious funeral oration of Mark Antony over the body of Julius Cæsar; Antony presented what he called the will of Cæsar, . . . giving to every man so many drachmas, and to the whole people

“— his walks,
His private arbors, and new planted orchards
On this side Tyber: he hath left them you
And to your heirs forever; common pleasures
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.’

“It would have been better (he continued) if Cæsar could have made a legacy to the Roman

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people of the example of a pure and spotless character. But the possessions which he left them were the result of war, conscription, and rapine. . . . Could Cæsar have bestowed on the Roman people ten times the wealth he possessed, what would it have been compared with the imperishable legacy left by men of letters to the country or the works of art, which transmit in a visible shape the mind of one age to the ages that come after it? The productions of mind are imperishable while men remain civilized; and therefore it is that . . . the creations of the intellect exceed in value all the bequests which it is in the power of all the kings of the earth to make.

“It is due to the memory of Fenimore Cooper, it is due to ourselves, it is due to the country, that we raise a monument of our gratitude to one who has left us an intellectual inheritance.

“Ladies and gentlemen (he added, drawing up his frame to its full height, and bowing, as if he were bowing to a king)—I now take leave of you!”

It was indeed a final leave-taking; for without our suspicion, and without his, he was already balancing his stalwart figure on the edge of the grave. In little more than six months thereafter—this was February—and in September of the same year he died at his home in Marshfield, by the sea.

CHAPTER V

IN our last chapter we spoke of a few to whom American birds sang, and who told us understandingly of the chorus of the woods. We had a glimpse of those—Freneau among them—who mingled journalism with song; and of Royall Tyler—a royal humorist, who swathed his humors in the robes of a judge.

We dwelt at length, and with a warmth his early Americanism invited, with the builder of the character of *Leather-stockting*, and the moulder of the fine lines of the *Red Rover*. We set forward the figure of that great lawyer and orator, Daniel Webster, whose speeches make an ineffaceable part of American eloquence—as mourner and eulogist on that important public occasion when the novelist Cooper was made subject of commemorative ceremonial. To make good our chronologic sequence we now go back to years when Cooper was making his first appeals to public

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favor—the period intervening between 1810 and 1830. What was stirring book-wise in the Massachusetts region in those days?

RICHARD DANA AND OTHERS

IN the year 1815 the *North American Review* was begun; but before that date those active in its establishment had been interested in what was called the Anthology Club, and had published a monthly anthology. Foremost among those known in this connection was Richard H. Dana,¹ author of “The Buccaneers”—who became an intimate friend of Bryant, and was himself a poet, though never of great popularity; he lived by the sea and he loved its voices. I give a sample of him—as one might take down for show an old bit of pottery of a style gone by, but very graceful and exquisitely worked; it is about a little beach-bird:—

“Thou little bird, thou dweller by the sea,
Why takest thou its melancholy voice?
And with that boding cry
Along the waves dost fly?
Oh, rather, bird, with me
Through the fair land rejoice!

¹R. H. Dana, b. 1787; d. 1879. His *Poems and Prose Writings*, published in Boston, 1833.

RICHARD H. DANA

“Thy flitting form comes ghostly dim and pale,
As driven by a beating storm at sea;
Thy cry is weak and scared.

• • • • •
“Then turn thee, little bird, and take thy flight
Where the complaining sea shall sadness bring
Thy spirit—never more!
Come, quit with me the shore,
For gladness and the light,
Where birds of summer sing.”

I think the quality of such verse will explain the intimacy of its author with the writer of the “*Thanatopsis*” (which first appeared in the *North American Review* for 1817) and with the writer of “*Lines to a Water-fowl*.” He is known also by prose papers contributed to his little periodical, called the *Idle-man*, published in New York, in which he had the assistance of Bryant and Washington Allston —this latter afterward his brother-in-law. He lived to a great age—dying in our time—but had a venerable aspect and the tremors of age before sixty; and I remember well the interest with which we collegians, in the winter of 1840, climbed into the old hall of the Exchange Building (then the finest in New Haven) to listen to “Dana’s lectures on Shakespeare.” It is hard to understand how this

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singularly philosophic mind, with its subtle reaches into the realms of poesy, is almost out of sight now; certainly his verse or prose are far less known than those vivid Defoe-like sketches of *Two Years Before the Mast*, which subsequently gave reputation to his son.

His friend, Washington Allston,¹ of South Carolina birth, but much in Italy, much in Boston, much too in England, was a man of the finest poetic susceptibilities, who, if he had not chosen to be among the first American artists of his time, could easily have taken rank with the more prominent authors.

Edward Everett,² a youngish man at that period and classically disposed, was ripening his mind and graces for his brilliant oratorical career; while George Ticknor³ was equipping himself—as Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard—for the execution of his important and most valuable work on Spanish literature.

John Quincy Adams—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—had, in 1815, after eight years of

¹ Washington Allston, b. 1779; d. 1843. *Lectures on Art and Poems*, 1850. *Life*, 8vo, by Dr. Jared Flagg, 1892.

² Edward Everett, b. 1794; d. 1865.

³ George Ticknor, b. 1791; d. 1871. *History of Spanish Literature*, 3 vols. 8vo. 1849.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

diplomatic service—first in Russia and afterward in England—returned to be Secretary of State for President James Monroe; but his pen-work had always a distinctive literary stamp. In 1810 he had published *Lectures on Rhetoric*; his European Diaries¹—written during Napoleon's final and disastrous campaigns—are of exceeding interest; but perhaps his best known and most relished literary *relique*, and one which has given hint and motif to many another of similar strain, is his quaint little poem on the “Wants of Man”; it numbers twenty-five stanzas—written consecutively, but each one for a different young lady of a school company which had besought his autograph—that dreadful fever prevailing even then. One or two of the verses you will thank me for quoting:—

“I want a garden and a park
My dwelling to surround—
A thousand acres—bless the mark—
With walls encompassed round;
Where flocks may range and herds may low,
And kids and lambkins play,
And flowers and fruits commingled grow,
All Eden to display.

¹ John Quincy Adams, b. 1767; d. 1848. *Memoirs* published, 1874-77.

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“I want a steward, butler, cooks;
A coachman, footman, grooms;
A library of well-bound books
And picture-garnished rooms;
Correggios—Magdalen, Night,
The Matron of the Chair,
Guido’s fleet coursers in their flight,
And Clades—at least a pair.”

After twenty-four such enumerations in as many verses, he sums up:—

“These are the wants of mortal man
I cannot want them long,
For life itself is but a span
And earthly bliss a song;
My last great want, absorbing all,
Is—when beneath the sod,
And summoned to my final call,
The mercy of my God!”

For nearly all the first quarter of this century the saintly Dr. Channing¹ was holding his church in Federal Street, Boston, and by the trueness, simplicity, and devoutness of his character, more than by the cogency of his reasoning, spreading his Unitarian beliefs, and in Hollis Street, at the same date, was his

¹ William Ellery Channing, b. 1780; d. 1842.

PETER RUGG

poetic disciple—John Pierpont¹—a Litchfield man—once better known than now—his somewhat fiery nature not given to long-sustained efforts; but in brief hortatory odes or songlets for special occasions—filling the air with rhythmic sound—like blasts of a trumpet.

PETER RUGG

ANOTHER less known name of the first quarter of the century in Boston was that of William Austin,² a clever lawyer, domiciled in Charlestown, and specially known for a curious, mystic, piquant narrative of the adventures of Peter Rugg and his daughter—once an immense favorite, and latterly finding revival of interest. Among my own earliest recollections is that of the emphatic reading of this tale by a certain strong-voiced kinswoman, who put the thunder and the torrents of rain and the dash of the story into—what was for me—a most memorable recital.

Peter Rugg, a middle-aged man, with a per-

¹ Rev. John Pierpont, b. 1785; d. 1866. *Airs of Palestine*, 1816.

² William Austin, b. 1778; d. 1841. *Peter Rugg, the Missing Man*, first appeared in 1824–26, in *New England Galaxy*.

turbed, anxious look (as old illustrations showed him), with his frightened little daughter Jenny seated by his side, in an old-fashioned, dilapidated chaise (or chair, as the chaise without a top was then called), is forever driving in search of his home in Middle Street, Boston. A stanch, white-footed black horse—from whose nostrils smoke is issuing—and nearly always upon the gallop—is harnessed to the cumbrous old chair; a heavy storm-cloud is always in his wake; rumbling thunder always tells of his approach; the post-riders all know him, and fear him; quiet horses upon the road tremble at sound of the clattering vehicle. Sometimes he is met in Newburyport, sometimes in Hartford, sometimes in Providence—always eager (by the few questions he asks of those he meets) to find his way to his home in Middle Street. The story of these different apparitions purports to be told by a benevolent old gentleman who has interested himself in the strange traveller and who patiently interviews all who may have encountered Rugg upon the road; but he gets little satisfaction. A pedler tells him he has met that man and carriage, within a fortnight, in four different States; each time he had inquired the way to Boston.

PETER RUGG AND DAUGHTER

“Long before he could distinguish the man in the chair his own horse stood still in the road, and flung back his ears. ‘In short,’ said the pedler, ‘I wish never to see that man and horse again.’”

Another reports his old chair as suddenly appearing on a race-course in Virginia, and his fiery black steed outrunning, as he passes on with the chair at his heels, every horse upon the field; and it is found afterward that the horse’s footprints upon the track showed something very like a cloven hoof. Another time, when the weary traveller believes he is upon the Merrimac, some stray interlocutor says, “No, this is Hartford, and that’s the Connecticut.”

“He wrung his hands and looked incredulous. ‘Have the rivers, too, changed their courses?’ said he. ‘But, see, the clouds are gathering—ah, that fatal oath,’ and his impatient horse leaped off, his hind flanks rising like wings—he seemed to devour all before him and to scorn all behind.”

[Mrs. Croft, an aged lady of Middle Street, is interviewed.] “She says—the last summer a person just at twilight, stopped at the door of the late Mrs. Rugg. Mrs. Croft, on coming to the door, perceived a stranger, with a child by his side, in an old weather-beaten carriage, with a

black horse. The stranger asked for Mistress Rugg, and was informed that she had died at a good old age twenty years before. The stranger replied: 'How can you deceive me so? Do ask Mrs. Rugg to step to the door.' 'Sir, Mrs. Rugg has not lived here for nineteen years; no one lives here but myself; my name is Betsey Croft.' "

After some further parleying, through which poor Jenny Rugg cringes and sobs beside her father, the horse begins to chafe and paw the ground; and so, giving the reins to him, Rugg passed like a hurricane up the street. A toll-gatherer, who, after losing his toll over and over, had essayed to stop him in his career, reported that as he talked with Rugg, the impatient horse quietly lifted up the gate with his teeth, flung it beside the turnpike, and trotted furiously away.

A Mr. Cutter reports that, years before, Rugg had stopped at the door, and as the weather was threatening, he had asked him to tarry for the tempest to pass over. "You're in an open chair, and your little daughter will perish." "Let the storm come," said Rugg, with a fearful oath. "I'll see home to-night in spite of the last tempest! or, may I never see home!"

PETER RUGG AND DAUGHTER

Tenants in Middle Street said that from year to year, at odd intervals, they thought they heard a clattering chair drive up to some house in the neighborhood, when—after a desperate pawing of the ground by the black charger—and something like a howl of disappointment—the vehicle thundered away with a sound that shook the houses. Once he is encountered on one of the horse ferry-boats plying between Jersey and New York—he has come from the Trenton road—though he thinks it is the Charles River he is crossing; but knows not what to make of the horse-boat: “Boston notion,” he says; “they ’re full of them—horses instead of oars.”

But his own steed is impatient, and puts down his forefoot with a force that makes every timber quiver; two sailors rush forward to take the beast by the head, and with an upward cast of his neck he drops them both in the river; as soon as they touch the dock on the New York side, Lightfoot dashes away with a vain hue and cry following him. At last, after many years—some say forty—some say a hundred—the old Rugg property in Middle Street is escheated to the Commonwealth; a day for its sale is appointed and ar-

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rives. The auctioneer is eloquent respecting the advantages of the estate:—

“There are stories about a Mr. Rugg as owner; but don’t you believe them,” he says.

“How commanding is the prospect! To the East, so near the Atlantic that Neptune, freighted with the treasures of the whole earth, can knock at your door with his trident. From the West, all the produce of that river of Paradise—the Connecticut—will soon, by the blessings of steam railways [published about 1824], pass under your windows; and thus, on this spot, Neptune shall marry Ceres, and Pomona from Roxbury, and Flora from Cambridge, shall dance at the wedding.”

“Bid liberally,” the auctioneer went on. “Don’t let the name of Rugg damp your ardor!” and gracefully waved his ivory hammer.

At length one dollar was offered. There was a deep silence. While the hammer was suspended a strange, rumbling sound was heard, which arrested the attention of everyone. Presently it was like “the sound of many shipwrights driving home, bolts of a seventy-four.” As the sound approached nearer, some exclaimed, “The buildings in Newmarket are falling.” Others said, “Not so, the sound comes from Hanover Street.”

PETER RUGG AND DAUGHTER

This proved true—for, presently, Peter Rugg in his old chair was in the midst of them.

“ ‘Oh, Jenny,’ said he, ‘I ’m ruined; our house has been burnt, and here are our neighbors around the ruins.’ ‘They don’t look like our neighbors,’ said Jenny; ‘do ask where mother is.’ In the meantime more than a thousand men had gathered round Rugg and his horse and chair. The searching eyes of Rugg to everyone present carried more conviction that the estate was his than could any parchment.

“The auctioneer’s arm fell to his hip—his late lively hammer hung heavy.

“The black horse too gave his evidence. He knew his journey was ended, he rested his cheek-bone over the cedar post and whinnied thrice—causing his harness to tremble from head-stall to crupper. Rugg then stood upright and demanded who had demolished his house. ‘Who are ye? I thought I knew every man in Boston—but you appear to be a new generation. *There* stands a Winslow, and next him a Dudley; will none of you speak to me?’ The horse was pawing threateningly. At last a voice—hollow and sepulchral—spoke out from the crowd. ‘There ’s nothing strange here but yourself, Peter Rugg. The tempest you defied has at last ended. Your house and wife and neighbors have all disappeared. You were cut off from the last age, and you can

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never be fitted to the present. Your home is gone, and you can never have another in this world.''"¹

SOME CONNECTICUT WORTHIES

TURNING now from the thunderous journey of Peter Rugg into the adjoining State, we find the old race of Hartford wits drifted away from that "head of sloop navigation" into death or distance; but others had come before the present century had turned its first quarter. Among them was that tender versifier, John Brainard,² a New London man by birth—small of stature, shy, consumed with poetic enthusiasms, and beginning newspaper work on the old *Connecticut Mirror*, where he was soon followed in the same line of duties by George Prentice,³ who afterward, with his trenchant paragraphs and biting wit, gave reputation to the *Louisville Journal*.

In New Haven there had been established about these times a miniature paper called the

¹ I have ventured here and there upon paraphrase in order to bring the Ruggs within limits; but the story is told by the old Boston lawyer with great cleverness and verve throughout.

² J. G. C. Brainard, b. 1796; d. 1828. *Literary Remains*, with Introduction by Whittier, 1832.

³ George D. Prentice, b. 1802; d. 1870. *Poems and Biography* (by J. J. Piatt), 1875.

CONNECTICUT WORTHIES

Microscope, with literary leanings, to which Brainard and others had contributed. Yale College, too—that steady old nurse of sound letters—was “upon the make” in those days; and when Bryant (whom we shall meet later) left Williams College in 1810—after some six months there—it was with the firm purpose of completing his college career at New Haven; only accident prevented Yale from counting the author of “*Thanatopsis*” among her children.

In the Connecticut College, Professors Kingsley¹ and Silliman were largely and safely reckoned upon; the first for his pains-taking accuracy, severe taste, and great range of literary knowledge; while Silliman² had—as early as 1810—published his popular journal of *Travels in England and Holland*—full of interesting information, and with a dash and flow that made the book eminently readable. He, too, was at the bottom of many of

¹ Fenimore Cooper (Fisher's *Life of Silliman*, vol. i., p. 337) tells a characteristic anecdote of Professor Kingsley. He had a trick of trotting me about the pages in order to get me mired; he may remember that I generally came off pretty well.”

² Benjamin Silliman, b. 1779; d. 1864. *Journal of Travels*, 1810. *Life*, by Professor Fisher, 1866, 2 vols., 8vo.

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those impulses which gave to chemical, geologic, and mineralogic studies in New England fresh prominence and significance; he founded the first and soundest of American scientific journals, and when—in later years—time had silvered his head, there was no falling away of his stately bearing, no shrinkage of his kindly smiles, and no stay or tremor to the old, unctuous, alliterative appeals to the “omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent Father” which, on every Sunday evening, woke the echoes in the chapel galleries.

Noah Webster,¹ thriving in repute, and in purse, upon the successes of his *Grammatical Institute*, had gone, in 1812, to a new home in Amherst; but everywhere over the waste regions of the country, his spelling-book fables, with their quaint, crude wood-cuts, were teaching their “black and white” moral lessons, and putting thievish boys in awe of philosophic farmers, who—if a pelting with turfs failed—would “try what virtue lay in stones.”

The poet James Hillhouse,² who had been a

¹ Noah Webster, b. 1758; d. (New Haven) 1843. *Dissertation on English Language*, 1789. *An American Dictionary*, etc. First issue, 1828.

² James A. Hillhouse, b. 1789; d. 1841. *The Judgment*, 1812. *Hadad*, 1825. *Dramas, Discourses*, etc., 1839.

JAMES A. HILLHOUSE

college mate of Cooper's (of a class a year or two later), was, in those days, preparing himself—under his ancestral trees—for those works of always elevated strain, and elegant finish, which won for him the pronounced praise of British critics as well as that beautiful tribute of Halleck in his poem of "The Recorder:"—

"Hillhouse, whose music, like his themes,
Lifts earth to Heaven—whose poet dreams
Are pure and holy as the hymn.
Echo'd from harps of Seraphim
By bards that drank at Zion's fountains
When glory, peace, and hope were hers,
And beautiful upon her mountains
The feet of angel messengers."

I can recall with distinctness the prim, lithe figure of the poet on his occasional strolls about New Haven streets in the early half of this century; in dress and manner wearing a good deal of the nice precision that belonged to his verse, but withal suave, kindly, and dignified.

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JAMES PERCIVAL

PERCIVAL,¹ of a somewhat later class in college, was of a very different figure and make-up—thin, haggard, unkempt; with a wild look in the eye; scudding through the streets with an uneasy swift pace, his shoes unblackened—untied perhaps; other garments dilapidated and rusty; with a scant old camlet cloak—in chilly weather drawn close about him. This describes his appearance well toward the middle of the century; but in 1815 he had taken one of the higher honors in his class—though not quite satisfied with the one he did take; always a little doubtful—then and later—if he received his full deserving. A cantankerous man, taking life hard; taking everything hard, except the minutiae of learning; most contented and easy when working till midnight on etymologies and on recondite phrases and philologic puzzles—his brain mating itself naturally with task work of that sort. So, too, in certain moments of an abnormal enthusiasm—coming to him more and more rarely as the years waned—slipping into melodious, engaging, even im-

¹ James G. Percival, b. 1795; d. 1856. First poem published 1820. *Geology of Connecticut*, 1842. *Life*, by J. H. Ward, 1866.

PERCIVAL

passioned, verses; but in the general intercourse of life, and in conventional every-day matters, impracticable, disorderly, immethodical, fault-finding, carping—sometimes ugly.

It is hard to believe all this of one who wrote such verse as that of which I give a sample:—

“The year leads round the seasons, in a choir
Forever charming and forever new,
Blending the grand, the beautiful, the gay,
The mournful and the tender, in one strain
Which steals into the heart like sounds that rise
Far off in moonlight evenings on the shore
Of the wide ocean—resting after storms;
Or, tones that wind around the vaulted roof
And pointed arches, and retiring aisles,
Of some old lonely minster, where the hand
Skilful, and moved with passionate love of art,
Plays o'er the higher keys, and bears aloft
The peal of bursting thunder, and then calls,
By mellow touches, from the softer tubes,
Voices of melting tenderness, that blend
With pure and gentle musings, till the soul,
Commingling with the melody, is borne
Rapt, and dissolved in ecstasy, to Heaven.”

There are other verses—lyrics, songs, what-nots, which have become household things. But Percival, the man, was never a household thing; living alone—in what often was little

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better than a garret; testily querulous whenever a cleaning was threatened; shunning women specially everywhere and all wheres; letting dust and grime accumulate over books, garments, papers, person; bolting his food without much taste for its savors; wandering among the hills for days to settle some point in crystallization or about the laminæ of rocks; bothering his head for weeks concerning the exact significance of some Scandinavian phrase; coy of any hand-shakings; restless if he encountered unexpectedly an acquaintance; his eyes staring with a wild glitter in them—straight forward—this was Percival.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

GUILFORD is a shore town some sixteen miles east of New Haven, with ponderous hills between. It is an ancient town, where lived in the middle of the seventeenth century that excellent Governor Leete, who was one of the founders, and who—once on a time—used his delegated authority to stay the Regicide Judges¹—and used his kindly heart to give

¹ Allusion to Regicides already made in connection with Dr. Stiles. Miss Delia Bacon (b. 1811) wrote *Tales of the Regicides*; and under kindred title, Frederick H. Cogswell has recently published a longer story, setting forth very pleasantly the related historic facts.

HENRY WHITFIELD

them hints for escape. There, too, lived for awhile that earnest Puritan preacher and friend of Governor Eaton's—Henry Whitfield—in a house, whose battered walls and buttressed chimney have lifted above the sward for more than two hundred and fifty years, and are in sight of every passer-by on the rail. This Whitfield had published *Helps to Stirr up to Christian Duties* before coming to America, and his migration did not stay his help. In his old stone house took place the first wedding in the colony—his daughter Sara marrying there the Rev. John Higginson, his assistant, successor in the Guilford pastorate. Mr. Higginson was later that well-known minister of Salem, Mass., who had his sparrings with the Quakers, and who, when over eighty, broke out into the Latinity which shines in his attestation to the merits of the *Magnalia*:

O nimium Dilecte Deo, Venerande MATHERE.

Mr. Higginson was succeeded in the Guilford church pastorate by Joseph Eliot—son of the so-called Apostle Eliot (of the Indian Bible), and father of Rev. Jared Eliot—"a man of pretie parts"—who published one of the first books¹ on husbandry proper, in New Eng-

¹ *Essays upon Field Husbandry in New England.*
Printed and sold by T. Green, New London, 1748.

land. And the same Joseph Eliot, pastor of the Guilford flock—whose patriarchal blood went out into many kindred lines of Footes and Beechers and Chittendens—was the ancestor of that genial and sunny-faced poet, who, not many years since, strolled up and down Guilford streets, carrying, with a blithe step, the gayeties of youth under the weight of four-score years.

I allude to Fitz-Greene Halleck,¹ who was a native of Guilford, and as early as 1811, left his occupation as clerk in a country store upon the Green, for a push to the centre of trade in New York; and of a surety, never did the “Corner-store” in Guilford have a more *debonnaire* and accomplished graduate than young Halleck. His education, indeed, had been of a common-school sort—supplemented, however, by a good deal of poetry reading—Campbell pretty certainly, whose *Pleasures of Hope* and *Lyrics* were fresh in those days, and not yet overshadowed by Byron. Indeed, Halleck was always an extravagant admirer of this Scottish poet, and in him may very likely have found the spur at a later day to his own execution of

¹ Fitz-Greene Halleck, b. 1790; d. 1867. *Croaker Papers*, published 1819; *Fanny*, same year; *Alnwick Castle and Other Poems*, 1827.

DRAKE

the martial splendors belonging to "Marco Bozzaris."

The Connecticut training of the young Guilford man does not seem to have forbidden a finding of his way to the old Park Theatre, and a large enjoyment of what he saw and heard there; he was always enamoured, too, of the graces of French speech, in which, presently—under city opportunities—he became an adept; nor was there ever a time, from the day when he set off from his Connecticut homestead, to those later days when he sauntered from Guilford Point to Guilford Green, in which he did not lift his hat, or pay a gracious compliment, with an easy courtesy that was more Gallic than American.

He began early to make verses, with an aptitude that was born in him; and on arrival in New York he continued to fire off his little squibs, anonymously, in corners of newspapers; but not until he had formed a sort of literary co-partnership with Drake—the author of that exquisite bit of fancy work, the *Culprit Fay*—did Halleck make himself popularly known. These two, under title of Croaker, Jr., or Croaker & Co., contributed certain satirical verses to the old *Evening Post*, which were of a wholly new quality, and were immensely ad-

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mired. They were talked of by politicians no less than by society people, and when the secret of authorship—for some time carefully concealed—was traced, Drake¹ was famous and Halleck was famous. It was in these *Croaker Papers* first appeared that flaming episode to the American flag:

“When Freedom from her mountain height
 Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
 And set the stars of glory there!”

Meantime Halleck was, on his own score, whipping into shape his satirical poem of *Fanny*, which followed quick upon the *Croakers*.

I give a verse or two from its opening, to give a hint of its manner and quality:

“Fanny was younger once than she is now,
 And prettier of course; I do not mean
To say that there are wrinkles on her brow.
 Yet, to be candid, she is past eighteen—
Perhaps twenty—but the girl is shy
 About her age, and heaven forbid that I

¹ Joseph Rodman Drake, b. 1795; d. 1820. *The Culprit Fly and Other Poems*, pub. 1836; later editions, 1847-1865.

HALLECK

Should get myself in trouble by revealing
A secret of that sort ! I have too long
Lov'd pretty women, with a poet's feeling."

This does not sound like any verses yet brought to your notice. Do not think, either, that he is without serious, tender touches—as where he laments the death of his friend, Joseph Rodman Drake—snatched from life at twenty-five, with only that delicate rhythm of the *Culprit Fay* for a monument :

“Tears fell when thou wert dying
From eyes unused to weep ;
And long where thou art lying
Will tears the cold turf steep.
When hearts, whose truth was proven
Like thine, are laid in earth,
There should a wreath be woven
To tell the world their worth.”

Nor can I forbear to quote a few stanzas from that “Burns” poem, which has given the germ and pith to so many periods of ambitious oratory :

“His is that language of the heart,
In which the answering heart would speak,
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,
Or the smile light the cheek ;

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And his that music, to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time,
In cot or castle's mirth or moan
In cold or sunny clime.

And who hath heard his song, nor knelt
Before its spell with willing knee,
And listened, and believed, and felt
The poet's mastery.

• • • • •
What sweet tears dim the eyes unshed,
What wild vows falter on the tongue,
When 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,'
Or 'Auld Lang Syne' is sung!"

All this is not like that verse of Dana's I have cited—not like the "Thanatopsis"—not like Dr. Dwight's *Conquest of Canaan*—not like Barlow's *Hasty Pudding*—not like Trumbull's *McFingal*. Here is something quite apart. He seems like a troubadour—so gay of spirit, yet tender. There is a briskness, a liveliness of language, which carry a wholly new note. 'T is like the effervescence of some old Attic salts—of a Pindar, a Sappho, a Horace—the outcrop, as it were, of ancestral tendencies coming down from far-away times; a talent it seems, as non-usable as flowers, for practical purposes—comparing with other lit-

HALLECK

erary folk of those days—Drake, perhaps, only excepted—as a vine with wanton tendrils and delicate spangles of gay bloom compares with sturdy bushes, trim trees, and harvests of grain. His very handwriting shows his troubadourship—his large remove from every-day practicalities; it is full of graceful curves and flourishes—so fine we can hardly read it.

Ebullient is the word for his work. It bubbles from him; there 's no air of strain, hardly any traces of revision or labor. The knowledge he had—and it was not small, either in classic reading or in poetry—he caught on the wing, as we catch butterflies; and with the same airy grace, I doubt not, with which he whips it into service. His conversation was of the same quality: words of the aptest significance, and of most musical balance, slipped from his lips as a brook flows—sparkling with bright epithets, tingling with gay mockery. Old Mr. Astor, for whom he was for very many years confidential clerk—and who left him, from his vast fortune, a beggarly annuity of two hundred dollars—was delighted to have him at his table; so, indeed, was everyone else who loved bright, cheery, witty talk. But I have not time to make his story long. Years after he had grown weary of social flatteries

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and of social conquests, he might have been found of an afternoon in a corner of a little French café in Warren Street, New York, delighting those fortunate enough to have his companionship. He never over-wrote; the little he did, he did wondrously well. It is only a small book we have from him; its ring is its own, and its echoes will last.

All the closing years of his life beyond the sixties, he passed quietly in his native town of Guilford. But even when past seventy he could respond in blithe verse to the call of friendship. Witness that little poem contributed to the *Knickerbocker Gallery*, in honor of his old friend, Lewis Gaylord Clark:

“From long neglected garden bowers
Come these, my song’s memorial flowers;
With greetings from my heart they come
To seek the shelter of thy home.
Though faint their hues, and brief their bloom,
And all unmeet for gorgeous room,
Of honor, love, obedience,
And troops of friends like thine,
I hope thou wilt not banish thence
These few and fading flowers of mine.
But let their theme be their defence,
The love, the joy, the frankincense
And fragrance o’ *Lang Syne!*”

Look at it in other for a still more gratifying purpose.

This is it, being in Scotland, many, many ages. It very particularly charmed in the beauty of wood the Sc. T. & the Prince of Wales, and with the added beauty of the Lady Superintendent, and I anticipate the delight, while by the way from Edgerton, offering a finishing touch to the blended attractions of the Lady and the Landscape.

Reflecting my thoughts on the complete arrangement and grandeur I have the honor to the dear Sirs, truly yours

Fitz-Greene Halleck

to

W. H. G. Mitchell Esq

Facsimile of fragment of letter from Fitz-Greene Halleck

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And even later in life the old troubadour buoyancy kept by him, as I am tempted to prove by citing here a fragment of a letter received from him only a few months before his death in 1867:

"I am very grateful," he writes, "for yr recent kind visit and deeply regret that my temporary illness compelled me to welcome you in pasteboard and not in person: Had yr card been brought to me a moment sooner, I would have hastened to ask the honor of giving you—after the fashion of the old French Kings—a right regal reception in my State Bed. . . . I have often when in Newhaven, been half emboldened to ride out and ring at yr door: not only as a travelling sight-seer—to see and to say that I have seen your farm and fireside: but to take a good look at its inmates for a still more gratifying purpose. While sight-seeing in Scotland many years ago, I was particularly charmed with the beauty of Torwood-lee, the seat of the Pringle family, and with the added beauty of its (then) Lady Proprietress. And I anticipate the delight, while visiting Edgewood, of finding a similar joy in the blended attractions of the Lady and the Landscape."

Did I not say he could weave compliments with a more than Gallic grace? One is tempted

JAMES K. PAULDING

to wish that he had, in his prime, written a long poem of serious intent; yet had he done so its graces would have hidden and overshadowed all else; he would have galloped away from his ground-work; he would have been full of delightful delays; he would have amiably forgotten his large purposes in his swift sallies for the minor end of renewing fresh, and ever fresh beguilements. Language itself, of which he was so deft, so artful, so full-voiced a master, would have made him play truant to a pre-considered scheme; an epithet tripping to his tongue would have won him to irrelevant issues; a tropical tangle of poetic similes would have kept him swinging in a little hammock of song beside the way, and neglectful of his march forward. Yet all his vagrancies would have been delightful; and his poem would have been spoiled—if spoiled at all—only by the spangles of his verse.

A POLITICIAN AND ROMANCER

OF Paulding¹ we must have a word to say—were it only because of his association with

¹ James K. Paulding, b. 1779; d. 1860. *Salmagundi*, 1807-8. *Backwoodsman*, 1818. *Westward Ho*, 1832. *Puritan and his Daughter*, 1849.

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Irving in the writing of those *Salmagundi Papers*, which a little before the Croaker days won the attention of the town by their quiet humor, and their playful satiric thrusts at some of the social follies of old New York. The book was modelled in parts pretty closely after the *Spectator*; and in others after Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*. There is hardly a passage of it now which holds place in the anthologies; yet the time is not long past when the story of the "Little Man in Black," made a very white page in the old *American Preceptor*. Paulding was a good representative of Knickerbocker blood; was Dutch to the bone—had a deal of quiet humor—a faculty for lively narrative—a fair capacity for making such stories as have a beginning and an end. But his art was not of the highest quality, and he had no zeal for painstaking; he wrote *currente calamo*, and the pen often ran away with him. He did not love the fatigue of corrections, nor the delays or delights of long-continued serious premeditation. His *Dutchman's Fireside*, which is perhaps better worth than anything else of his writing, had a large success; but it can now hardly be classed among the lively survivals from that time. It shows us good

JAMES K. PAULDING

Dutch women folk—who have more piquancy than Cooper's; it shows us Indians who are very crudely red in color and who are in no way idealized; it shows us quaint Dutch interiors with American-Dutch characters, which are passably interesting and which have an air of great *vrai-semblance*. But, as a whole, the book is pale in tint, and very slow in progress—as compared with the livelier ones of Cooper.

There are passages in his novels that recall the excellent manner of Fielding—especially when he pictures engaging and tantalizing young womankind; there are parts that recall *Tristram Shandy*; abundant evidences of wide and appreciative reading; power of shrewd and minute observation as well; excellent advices in good, piquant, epigrammatic form; in short, so many particular minor felicities that you wonder the general result is not larger and better—he lacking, it would seem, the power of dramatic assemblage of his good work into the fashion and method of a well-balanced story; and we come to his *finis* with an assurance that he is capable of doing good things, but wondering that he has not done better.

Paulding wrote many poems also; perhaps

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too many. His *Backwoodsman*¹ runs to the formidable length of three thousand lines. I have resisted the temptation to read it through; most people do.

He was a successful “man of affairs,” however, and could afford extravagances poorer men would have shunned; he was a politician, also, coming to preferment, and holding the place of Secretary of the Navy under President Van Buren in 1837. In his later years he retired to his beautiful country home, above Poughkeepsie, on the Hudson, where he busied himself—partly with his pen, partly with farming fancies; under such regimen he lingered amid the beauties of Hyde Park until the year 1860, when he died at the ripe age of eighty-one.

¹ *The Critic*, a cotemporary Philadelphia Journal (1820), is specially denunciatory of the poem and its author. See Professor A. H. Smyth's *Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors* (1892), full of curious and interesting information relating to early American Magazinists.

CHAPTER VI

IN our last talk we had a strain of that sombre, yet subtle, poetry of the elder Dana, the memory of which still ebbs and flows with the billowy tides that murmur or roar—as the winds command—around his old sea-shore home at Cape Ann. More space—but not more of love or regard—was given to the diverting Peter Rugg legend of that clever Boston lawyer, William Austin, whose wit and gibes not only made lively his legendary work, but scored his record with the sharp experiences of a duel.

Taking up a southwesterly trail from Boston we came upon some new Connecticut worthies of the pen—Brainard, Webster, Hillhouse, Percival, to which names might have been added that of Richard Alsop, their elder and forerunner in those poetical paths which he lighted up with scholarly allusions and witty pleasantries.¹ In the pleasant company of

¹ Richard Alsop, b. (Middletown, Ct.) 1761; d. 1815. He was chiefest among those wits who established and sustained *The Echo* (1807), which mercilessly satirized the whole army of "Democrats."

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Halleck we went from the shore-town of Guilford to the purlieus of that old New York, where as yet (1815 to 1825) that prince of clubmen, Anthony Bleecker, was still flourishing, and had so set forth Captain Riley's story of his wreck and captivity among the Arabs as to give to the famous *Narrative* of the wreck of the brig *Commerce*, the currency of a brilliant fiction. In that day such merchants as the elder Astor and Philip Lydig were living in comely, modest houses upon that block of Broadway—between Vesey and Barclay Streets—where now the gaunt and grimy Astor hostelry has become almost venerable; the music from Scudder's Museum floated at even-tide around the gathering-place of those early Tammany braves whom our young Connecticut bard apostrophized—after the manner of Anacreon Moore:—

“There 's a barrel of porter at Tammany Hall,
And the buck-tails are swigging it all the
night long;
In the time of my boyhood 't was pleasant to call
For a seat and segar 'mid the jovial throng.”¹

The same versatile poet had in other lines of this budget of verse his shy at the tedious

¹ From Halleck's *Fanny*; interpolated with other verses (and Moore's “Bendemeer”) at Stanza LXXVIII.

WASHINGTON IRVING

rhymes of Paulding—in the *Backwoodsman*—and at the doubtful meteorites

“Toss’d from the moon on Doctor Mitchill’s table.”

Of *Salmagundi*—usually attributed to Paulding—there has been mention, as well as of the bolstering material contributed thereto by members of the Irving family. William Irving (a brother-in-law of Paulding’s) is understood to have contributed most of the political squibs from the “Cockloft” mansion; but a much younger brother—Washington Irving—had also such a hand in it and in other literary ventures as to warrant longer talk of him.

WASHINGTON IRVING

HE is among the few authors thus far brought to your notice who was a native of the city of New York; and there are elderly people still living who remember the peaked gables of the old house in William Street, upon the west side, where the author of the *Sketch Book* was born;¹ and there are many more who can recall

¹ Washington Irving, b. 1783; d. 1859. Earlier editions of various works of his, published by John Murray, London; later and full editions—as well as the best—by Putnam, New York. *Life and Letters*, by Pierre Irving. 4 vols. Putnam, 1862.

vividly the twinkle of the eye with which the old gentleman, in the later years of his life, told of his boyish escapades over this or that loft—through this or that window, for a run to the near theatre in John Street, or for a foray upon adjoining roofs, whence he could safely discharge a little volley of pebbles down the chimney of some amazed Dutch neighbor. I think that this mischievous propensity in the lad was not a little quickened by the severe discipline of the father—good Deacon Irving—who held all playhouses in detestation, and looked with a frown upon all Sunday reading in his household, beyond the catechism and Bible stories, or (what was a delightful exception for the boy) Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. On week-days he supplemented this with *Gulliver's Travels*, the voyages of Sindbad and of *Robinson Crusoe*; and his march to the school of an old soldier in Fulton Street gave him glimpses—across gardens and between houses—of East River and the heights of Long Island. For some cause he did not have the “innings” at Columbia College which his elder brothers had enjoyed; instead, he went into a law-office, relieving the tedium of that study by writing newspaper squibs under the pen-name of “Jonathan Oldstyle,” and relieving it

WASHINGTON IRVING

still more by a memorable first trip up the Hudson—tacking and scudding through the Highlands and past the Catskills—on a visit to some kinsfolk in what were then the wilds of northern New York. It was in a large measure a health trip; but failing of good results, he was in 1806—then twenty-one, not strong, but a handsome young fellow, full of gentlemanly courtesies—easily prevailed upon (at the instance of his brother William, who was seventeen years his senior, and a man of consequence) to undertake a European voyage. It was a voyage of romance for him; he coasted through the Mediterranean, landed in Italy, and in a sudden friendship for Washington Allston—whom he encountered at Rome—was almost won over to entrance upon the career of an artist. But he goes on to Paris and sees Talma there; visits Holland—through which he passes on his way to England—and is a little discomfited by the rather hilarious attention which is bestowed upon “his gray coat, his embroidered white vest, and his colored small-clothes”—a gay young fellow! In London he sees Mrs. Siddons, and chances to be in the theatre on the very night when, like a thunderbolt, the announcement is made that Admiral Nelson—whose fleet he had seen

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manceuvring off Messina—had been slain at Trafalgar.

On his return—strong in health now, and with a rare stock of experiences—he joins his old friend Paulding in writing and publishing anonymously the *Salmagundi* papers—his older brother, William, as I have said, assisting; and another good friend—Gouverneur Kemble, of Cockloft Hall—aiding with advices. It had a certain success; the secret of authorship was well kept; but Irving was never boastful of this early performance. His law-studies were again undertaken in the office of Judge Hoffman, but he was a good deal more engrossed by the Judge's daughter than by the Judge's teaching; and thus came about that romantic episode, whose tragic termination (by the death of Miss Hoffman) gave a tinge of sadness to Irving's whole future life.

At this period he was putting the finishing touches to that book which first established his fame as a humorist—I mean the Knickerbocker *History of New York*; he was too disheartened in those days of despondency to enjoy the applause that followed upon its publication; and for some years thereafter, and for the same reason, he could regard its broader sallies of humor only with aversion. There is some co-

WASHINGTON IRVING

quetting with the law after this; and he had appeared somewhat earlier in a quasi-legal capacity at the trial of Aaron Burr for treason, in 1807. But in 1810 he became silent partner—perhaps it were better to say ornamental partner—in a commercial house established and managed by his brothers, Peter and Ebenezer. This promised, and for a time secured to him, a fair revenue, allowing such easy dalliance with literature as humors permitted. In 1815 he sailed for Europe to join his brother Peter, who represented the Irving house in England; besides which, a married sister had a charming home, gay with young voices, near to Birmingham; scores of old friends were ready to welcome him in London; and Napoleon was just started on a new career after the escape from Elba. But on Irving's arrival in Liverpool the battle of Waterloo had been fought; his brother Peter was ill; and the affairs of the house of Peter and Ebenezer Irving were shaky. As a consequence, much commercial task-work fell to his hands; there was relief, however, in the trips to London, and to the charming home near Birmingham—in the meetings with Allston and the painter Leslie—in the theatre-going where Keene and the O'Neil were shining—in quiet saunterings

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about the green lanes of Warwickshire—in encounters with Campbell and Disraeli, and with Scott at Abbotsford. The Knickerbocker fame opened doors to him everywhere; and his delightful humor, *bonhomie*, and courtesy kept them open. There were two or three years of such pleasures, damped by commercial forebodings, till at last, in 1818, the house went into bankruptcy. It was an honest bankruptcy, and he was left virtually without resources.

His elder brother, William, however—having, perhaps, foreseen the crisis, and being then an influential member of Congress—had secured for him a Secretaryship in the United States Navy Department, with a salary of \$2,500.

CLERK, AUTHOR, AND TRAVELLER

WASHINGTON IRVING declined acceptance absolutely, and set himself to the task of working his way by his pen. But for some months after sending his refusal of office—much to the discontent of his brother—he could accomplish nothing. “Fancy, humor—all seemed to have gone from me” (I remember his saying this with energy, and with a clenched hand, in later life). “I had offended the best brother a man ever had; given over the chance Provi-

IRVING'S SKETCH-BOOK

dence seemed to have opened, and now my writing-hand was palsied; a more miserable, doubting creature than I was in the two following months can hardly ever have lived."

But at last the day dawned for him; the old graces flowed back upon his thought, and a new literary career was ushered in by the brilliant success of his *Sketch-Book*. It was in June, 1819, that its first number—ninety-two pages in length, in large type, and with "copious margins"—appeared in New York and Philadelphia. The story of Rip Van Winkle was among the very earliest of the sketches; and that delightful tatterdemalion leaped at once into that blaze of popularity which has kept by him ever since. In the following year (1820) John Murray, of London, became the publisher of the collected numbers of the *Sketch-Book*, giving therefor an honorarium of five hundred guineas. No such sum had—before that date—been given by a British publisher for an American book. Double this amount was given for *Bracebridge Hall* in 1822; and triple the amount for the *Tales of a Traveller* in 1824.

The *Sketch-Book* was commended to Murray by no less a personage than Walter Scott—then at the height of his fame—and it was

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approved by the best critical judgment of those days for its graces of language, its delicate fancies, its touches of pathos, and its quiet humor; and although there may be modern question of this judgment at some points, there is a leaven of charm in it for the average mind, which has kept it in favor and made it the most popular of the Irving books.

Meantime our author was making good his title of “traveller” over the highways and byways of Europe. In 1826 he was in Spain as *attaché* to the American Legation; and at the instance of Alexander Everett—then United States Minister at the Spanish Court—he entered upon those Spanish studies which resulted in his *Life of Columbus*. The research requisite to this work gave Irving a footing with those serious readers who had ignored him as a romancer; its accuracy, its clearness of style, and its safe judgments have given it a place in all reputable historic libraries.

The *Conquest of Granada* and the *Alhambra* grew out of his study of Spanish chronicles—the latter especially provoked and nursed by the author’s enjoyable occupancy—by favor of the Governor—of a suite of rooms in the old Moorish palace in the summer of 1829. And it was there, in those ruinous courts—beguiled

IRVING BANQUET

by the dash of the silvery fountains and the chanting of the birds—that news came of his appointment to the Secretaryship of the American Legation in London. So away he hies thither, with copy for his *Alhambra* in his portmanteau, and enters upon three years of diplomatic lines of life in England; and not until 1832—after seventeen years of absence does he take ship for his old American home. Yet through all those seventeen years his heart had not been warped from its American leanings; and it was with the joyousness of a boy that he came in sight again of the harbor, the steeples and the roofs of his native city.

HOME AGAIN

ON one of the May-days following upon the return, his friends gave him a banquet of welcome at that old City Hotel, whose august front of red brick stood but a little way above the Trinity Church-yard, upon the west side of Broadway. The venerable Chancellor Kent—then in his seventieth year, presided; Paulding was there—that good friend, and old helpmeet in the *Salmagundi* days; so were scores of those old merchants of New York, who had

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hobnobbed with the Irving brothers in years gone by; and the families of the Hones, the Van Wycks, the Kings, the Renwicks, the Cuttings, the Gracies, the Duers, the Stuyvesants—these all were represented; and many another were among the convives, of whom the tale was three hundred.

Irving had always a wholesome horror of speech-making; and there was great trepidation in his tongue and in his manner as he struggled to acknowledge the banqueters' great boom of welcome; the pretty conventionalities he had thought to utter slipped from his memory and his grasp; but the hearty, broken utterances—of his joy at a return, and of his pride in the home of his nativity over-passed all lines of rhetorical triumph, and called out such tempests of applause as submerged and kindly covered his hesitations and embarrassment.

It was in the year immediately following this triumphant return that he purchased and remodelled the stone cottage upon the Hudson, where he lived thereafter, and where he died. It stood upon a wooded shelf of the bank of the great river up which Hendrick Hudson had sailed; it looked out upon the lower stretches of the placid Tappaan Zee; its crowfoot gables carried memories of its Dutch neighborhood;

MINISTER TO SPAIN

its gnarled and ancient trees threw morning shadows upon a pavilion matted all over with ivies from Melrose; its little lawn before the low-browed porch gleamed under the noon-day sun like emerald; he loved its picturesqueness, its simplicity, its quaintness, its cosiness, and he made it gay and cheery by his abounding hospitality.

But the habit of travel is not wholly dead in him. The great West invites him, and feeds his lusty Americanism with its great reaches of prairie and those rude cabins of the borderers—where beef and dumplings, tumbling from the seething kettle, promise a banquet of Apicius.¹ His world-culture has not, and never did forbid fullest and keenest sympathy with the prairie huntsman or the prairie house-wife; and such kindly, humane sympathies bubbled from him always and everywhere.

It was, therefore, with quick and wide approval of the public—irrespective of party—that he was named, in 1842, at the instance of Daniel Webster, U. S. Minister to Spain. The old gentleman (aged fifty-nine) has his spasms of reluctance at quitting the home into which he has nestled: but yields to urgency, and at one stage of his journey writes back:

¹ *Tour on the Prairies; Adventures of Captain Bonneville.*

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"I shall endeavor to resign myself to the splendor of Courts, to the conversation of courtiers, comforting myself with the thought that the time will soon arrive when I shall once more return to sweet little Sunnyside, to be able to sit on a stone-fence and talk about politics and rural affairs with neighbor Forkel, and Uncle Brom" [his Brother Ebenezer].

His residence of four years at the Court of Spain was uneventful; there are glimpses in his letters, of the young Queen, of Christina, of Espartero, of Narvaez; and sometimes a rich, returning glow of the old Andalusian life; he was never fully weaned from a yearning fondness for the atmosphere of Spain, for the dark-eyed women, and for the proud grandees, who once gave dignity to its history.

A Life of Washington which he had forecast at an earlier period found little furtherance from this diplomatic episode; uncertain health, too, interfered with that old blitheness of mood under which only his best work could find accomplishment. He, however, resumed that task after his return in 1846, but it dragged heavily; "wearisome muddles" beset him; nor was it until 1859—within less than a twelve-month of his death that the fifth and last volume of his *Washington* appeared. The work

IRVING AUTOGRAPH

shows a clear, pale outline of the great American leader; it presents vividly the alignment of forces for battle; it is full of sagacious judgment, great fairness, and a sturdy and warm American feeling; but there is no such strong grasp of the subject or such sustained vigor of treatment as will rank it with his earlier books.

In token of his kindness of heart (not to say —over-kindness) toward young writers, perhaps I may be pardoned for publishing—after the lapse of forty-six years—this private notelet from Sunnyside:—

Sunnyside Dec 31st 1851

My dear Sir,

Accept my warmest thanks for the copy of the Dream of life which you have had the kindness to send me. I had already received and read it and it was passing from hand to hand of my domestic circle. Could you antecede the effects of the journal of it upon us all, you would feel

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satisfied of your success in bridging the
time chasm.

Be assured your little work will
remain one of the cherished favours of our
literature, making its way into every
American home and securing a welcome
abode within a every American heart.

Yours ever truly
Wm. Bulwer

Washington Irving

LATER YEARS AND DEATH

No financial anxieties disturbed his later years; the revenue from his books was large; he could, and did make his old generosities more lavish; his hospitalities were free and hearty; he loved the part of entertainer, and graced it. His mode of living showed a quiet elegance, but was never ostentatious. At the head of his table, in his sunny southwest room—cheered by the presence of old friends—his

IRVING AT HOME

speech sparkled with young vivacities, and his arching brow, and a whimsical light in his eye foretold and exalted every sally of his humor.

His rides, his drives, and cheery smiles of greeting brought him to the knowledge of all the neighborhood; it was my great privilege, again and again, to be witness to the cordiality of those greetings; nor can I forbear giving here some record of such an occasion—though it may take one over ground already familiar to the reader. By his kind invitation I had gone up to pass my first day at Sunnyside, and he had promised me a drive through Sleepy Hollow. What a promise that was! I think no boy ever went to his Christmas holidays more joyously than I to meet the engagement.

The vehicle in which we drove was an old-fashioned gig or chaise, and the well-groomed horse, with his sedate and dignified paces, was the very picture of respectability. It was along the great Albany Post Road that we drove; he, all alert, and brisk with the cool morning breeze blowing down upon us from over Haverstraw Heights and across the wide sweep of river. He called attention to the spot of poor André's capture—not forbearing that little touch of sympathy, which came to firmer—yet not disloyal expression—after-

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ward, in his story of Washington. A sweep of his whip-hand told of the trees under which Paulding and the rest chanced to be loitering on that memorable day.

As he went whirling along, a short way farther northward, I ventured a query about the memorable night-ride of Ichabod Crane, and of a certain headless horseman?

Aye, it was hereabout, that tragedy came off too. "Down this bit of road the old horse 'Gunpowder' came thundering: there away—Brom Bones with his Pumpkin ("I tell you this in confidence," he said), was in waiting; and along here they went clattering neck and neck—Ichabod holding a good seat till Van Ripper's saddle-girths gave way; and then, bumping and jouncing from side to side, as he clung to mane or neck (a little pantomime with the whip making it real), and so at last—away, yonder—well, where you like, the poor pedagogue went sprawling to the ground—I hope in a soft place." And I think the rollicking humor of it was as much enjoyed by him that autumn morning, and that he felt in his bones just as relishy a smack of it all—as if Katrina Van Tassel had held her quilting frolic, only on the yester-night.

Somewhat farther on, among the hills which

SLEEPY HOLLOW

look down on Sleepy Hollow, he pointed out, with a significant twinkle of the eye—which the dullest boy would have understood—some orchards, with which he had early acquaintance; and specially too, on some hill-side (which I could find now) a farmery, famous for its cider-mill, and the good cider made there—he, with the rest—testing it over and over in the old slow way with straws; but provoked once on a time to a fuller test, by turning the hogshead, so they might sip from the open bung; and then (whether out of mischief or mishandling, he did not absolutely declare to me) the big barrel got the better of them, and set off upon a lazy roll-down-the-hill—going faster and faster—they more and more frightened, and scudding away slantwise over the fences—the yelling farmer appearing suddenly at the top of the slope—but too broad in the beam for any sharp race—and the hogshead between them plunging, and bounding, and giving out ghostly, guttural explosions of sound and cider, at every turn. The reader may judge if Mr. Irving did not put a nice touch to that story!

And many another such he told upon that breezy autumn morning which slipped away too quickly—his sunny cheer brightening and

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shortening the hours. But, shall I be reckoned indiscreet, if I say that at times—rare times it is true—I have seen this most amiable gentleman manifest a little of that restive choler which sometimes flamed up in William the Testy? Not long-lived, not deliberate—but a little human blaze of impatience at something gone awry in the dressing of a garden border, in care of some stable pet, that was all gone with the first flash, but marked unmistakably the sources of that wrathy and pious zest (with which he is not commonly credited) and with which he loved to put a contemptuous thrust of his sharper language into the bloat of up-start pride, and of conceit, and of insolent pretension.

When he died, the grief was universal and sincere. On the day of his funeral (December 1, 1859), a remarkably mild day for the season, the shops of Tarrytown were closed and draped in mourning; and both sides of the high-road leading from the church (of which he had been Warden) to the grave by Sleepy Hollow, where his body lies, were black with the throngs of those who had come from far and near to do honor to his memory. We cannot class Washington Irving among those strenuous souls who delve new channels for thought;

PETER PARLEY

his touch in literature is of a gentler sort. We may safely, however, count him the best beloved among American authors—his character was so clean, his language so full of grace, his sympathies so true and wide, and his humor so genuine and abounding. His books all beam with a kindness that should not, and will never be forgotten.

PETER PARLEY

IT would be invidious to omit from these *Collectanea of American Writers* who were born toward the close of the last century that favorite story-teller for boys, who, in a cocked hat and coat with big lapels, and pockets stuffed with goodies, used to exploit himself upon the title pages of his little miniature quartos as Peter Parley.¹ What a rare old gentleman he was to be sure! And with what a grandfatherly, homely, fireside way, he told us youngsters—with pricked ears and most eager—about the Turks and the Greeks, and about London Bridge and the terrible Bastille! It was a great break-down of our young cher-

¹ Samuel G. Goodrich, b. 1793; d. 1860. His books counted by the hundred. His *Reminiscences*, a virtual autobiography, published in 2 vols. 12mo, 1856.

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ished image to learn in after-life that the cocked hat, and staff, and big pockets were only purest, untruthful fancies, and that this master of boy-literature was a dapper man with an active, nervous step, who held consular office and stamped passports for the “regulation” fees!

His real name was Goodrich, and he was a native of a pretty town in Western Connecticut—gravitating somehow, as he reached manhood, to that old literary centre of Hartford:—publishing books there and selling them; then voyaging to England and France—taking his quick Connecticut eyes with him, and seeing multitudes of things which sparkled up, afterward, at all sorts of angles, and odd groupings, in the flood of his abounding books. By that travel he ripened for a life in Boston, and was publisher there (writing between whiles)—specially of that old annual, called *The Token*, in which some of Hawthorne’s *Twice-told Tales* first saw the light; and where N. P. Willis flashed his maiden sword upon the hot-pressed pages of that glittering gift-book.

A serious word of commendation is to be said for that happy story-telling art of Peter Parley, which converted the stiff geographic

S. G. GOODRICH

text-books of Maltebrun and of Woodbridge into lively pictures of great countries, where people talked of battles, and builded—as they did at home; and where the rivers ran and sea sparkled and mountains brooded over valleys—as they did not do in bigger and more learned geographies. I think that the image of London Tower, which came to me first through the spectacles of Mr. Peter Parley (God bless him), did not wholly fade, when I tramped through its galleries and dungeons; and it abides with me still. His books lifted the old geography tasks into joys; all honor to him for this.

This Mr. Goodrich wrote poems too; upon these we cannot dwell; few people do; but we will take a gracious leave of him in a stanza of his own inditing—“Good-Night!”

“The sun has sunk behind the hills,
The shadows o'er the landscape creep;
A drowsy sound the woodland fills
And nature folds her arms to sleep:
Good-night—good-night!

“The bat may wheel on silent wing—
The fox his guilty vigils keep—
The boding owl his dirges sing,
But love and innocence will sleep;
Good-night—good-night!”

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MRS. SIGOURNEY

MRS. SIGOURNEY—who wore the maiden name of Lydia Huntly¹—was born in the picturesque old town of Norwich; and was of right a “Daughter of the Revolution”—her father having fought in the battles of that colonial crisis, and upon the right side; indeed, she made show very early, of an acute Americanism—due largely perhaps to the influences of a stately colonial dame of wealth and position—who had made of her a protégée and a pet. Under such conditions, a good education was assured, and she began early to warble those pleasant rhythmical numbers, in the weaving of which very few women of her day could equal her ease and grace. The mellifluous roll of the old Indian names caught her quick ear, and she cast “Ontario’s billow,” “Niagara’s thunder,” and the “hoar forehead of Monadnock” into the pulses of accommodating, yet picturesque verse, long before “Hiawatha” had

¹ Lydia Huntly Sigourney, b. 1791; d. 1865. Among other titles of her books, we note: *Sketch of Connecticut Forty Years Since*, 1824; *Poems*, 1827; *Letters to Young Ladies*, 1833; *Zinzendorf*, 1834; *Pocahontas*, 1841; *Pleasant Memories*, 1842; *Scenes in My Native Land*, 1844.

MRS. SIGOURNEY

wrapt the savage nomenclature into more beguiling music.

The young singer had her experiences at school-keeping—first in her native town—and again in Hartford, whither the poetically minded seemed to drift by some powerful attraction—as in the day of the “Wits,” and in more recent times—while as yet no guardian genius looked down from the Capitol Dome, and no Retreat for the “unwise” invited the feeble.

There were those who detected in the occasional verses of this Connecticut poetess an echo of the notes of Mrs. Hemans, who at about the same period was piping musically from her home amid the fastnesses of North Wales. Yet her sterling New Englandism was always emergent; in some sense, she might have been reckoned the Laureate of Connecticut Congregational Puritanism—illustrating the royalties of her bailiwick by ode, lines, memorials, epithalamiums, family pictures—putting *vrai-semblance* and great kindliness into each and all, with a setting of earnest and pronounced piety.

She not only wrought in verse, but in prose—voluminously; the total number of her books counting among the forties; there were “Nar-

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ratives," "Sketches," "Memories"—many of these having a positive historic value, by reason of her truthful presentment of scenes and characters she had known in her young days. There was stiffness perhaps. She was too conscientious to rub out angularities; so true she could not tone down the harshnesses. Like those old photo-masters who put the heads of their subjects between pads on iron arms, she made her portraits show all the stark lines of truth—but it was truth suffering a grievous pinch, from the over-lacings of propriety.

In the year 1819 Miss Huntly became the wife of Mr. Sigourney, a wealthy merchant of Hartford, and for many years thereafter was

*I consider it a gain to
humanity, when a man of education
and refinement turns his attention
to that employment which God
blessed in Eden; and hoping that
sought may be permitted to find
your Paradise, or its inmates, and
respectfully & affectionately yours
L. H. Sigourney.*

Fragment of a letter from Mrs. Sigourney

MRS. SIGOURNEY

in the enjoyment of an elegant home, looking down upon that intvale where Little River coiled (and still coils) through the city, and where now a beautiful park delights the eye of every passing traveller. Through all her wifely, as through her maidenly days, she guarded her punctilioiusness—was overcareful in language—minding her stops—not venturing upon common-sounding names; calling a pig “the animal to whom the Evangelist alluded,” or the “adjunct of every economical household;”¹ wary of anything—though honest and hearty—which had smack of vulgarity; and educating both lip and pen to the “prunes and prisms” of a large but somewhat narrow propriety.

And yet, for all this, her unswerving rectitude of life and action, her untiring advocacy of all good causes, won for her a respect and a consideration which were better worth than the praises of over-dainty critics. On her English travel—of which she pleasantly told the story, there were attentions paid her at once earnest and abounding. Nor did these attentions fail at home.

A little confirmatory incident, to which the present writer was witness, may be detailed:

¹ Miss Perkins's *Old Houses of Norwich*, p. 198.

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She chanced to be in Washington (I think in the winter of 1848-49) when an important case was to be argued by Mr. Webster before the Supreme Court. She was anxious to be present; and came with a young friend, at a late hour, when the old cavernous recesses of the Court were nearly filled with eager attendants. Mr. Webster, rolling his great eyes around the chamber, as was his wont—noticed the late arrival of the poetess, and rising—left his briefs—strode up the crowded alleyway, and greeting her in his largest manner, insisted upon escorting her—as if she were a queen, and he, master of royal ceremonies—down to the very front of the chamber, where he found her a place among the distinguished advocates. The old lady bore the unusual and marked attention with a little of nervous trepidation, yet with a glow of gratification that lighted beamingly her fine matronly face. I think she never felt more touched by any public recognition of her literary or social consequence. It was a graceful tribute by our greatest master of forensic eloquence to the modest Connecticut mistress of the crafts of poesy.

A single touch of the quality of this forgotten songstress I cull from her “Alpine Flowers:”—

OTHER SINGERS

“Did some white-winged messenger
On Mercy’s mission trust your timid germ
To the cold cradle of eternal snows?
Or, breathing on the callous icicles,
Bid them with tear-drops nurse ye?

—Tree nor shrub

Dare that drear atmosphere; no polar pine
Uprears a veteran front; yet there ye stand,
Leaning your cheeks against the thick-ribbed ice,
And looking up with brilliant eye to Him
Who bids you bloom unblanched amid the waste
Of desolation.”

THREE OTHER SINGERS

ANOTHER good daughter of the Revolution, whose charming bits of tric-trac verse, with such simple and tender touches in them, as seemed traceable to some of the minor poems of Wordsworth, was Miss Hannah Gould.¹ Her lines were carefully wrought, and they had a buoyancy and a sprightliness which put them upon wide voyagings. A special favorite used to be that Revolutionary verselet:—

“Come, Grandfather, show how you carried your
gun
To the field, when America’s freedom was won,

¹ Hannah Gould, b. 1789; d. 1865. *Poems*, published 1832.

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Or bore your old sword, which you say was new
then,
When you rose to command, and led forward
your men."

Yet again, there was a poetically disposed Mrs. Gilman,¹ of rare taste, educated under Cambridge influences, but early transplanted to the South, where she put into her graceful verse the flora of those new latitudes; the magnolia "towering with imperial pride" showed its white glory in her rhymes, and the "long gray moss" trailed in seemly mourning through her pleasant descriptive sketches of old plantation life.

Another with far more of poetic passion and verse than either of those last named, was Mrs. (Gowen) Brooks,² who challenged not a little prejudice by her affected title of "Maria del Occidente." It was given currency, however, by no less a man than Dr. Southey, who declared her to be the "most imaginative of living poetesses." Born and bred in New Eng-

¹ Caroline (Howard) Gilman, b. 1794; d. (Washington, D. C.) 1888. Known specially by her *Recollections of a New England Housekeeper*, 1835.

² Maria Gowen, b. about 1790; d. (Cuba) 1845. *Zophiel*, by which she is best known, published in Boston, 1825.

MARIA DEL OCCIDENTE

land, her youth was scarred by varying fortunes; she was rich—was poor; deaths of near relatives clouded her life. From the easterly winds of Medford she changed her home to the tropic heat of Matanzas; inherited a fortune there, and with wealth and her unfinished poem of *Zophiel* returned to the cooler latitudes of New Hampshire, and under the breezy atmosphere of the Connecticut valley gave her maturer forces to the completion of her passionate poem. She deals therein with spirits bad and good; with solemnities which in her hand are stripped of awe; with Hebrew traditions that yield only their pathos and shifting shadows. Raphael and fallen angels swing the balances in which the fates of mortals—including the wonderful Egl—a swing to and fro. Love is rampant; lutes make torrents of intoxicating sound; death chambers range next to bridal bowers; while mysteries and silken splendors, and poetic bewitchments of glowing narrative hide and yet discover the passionate besom of the story. Had she lived in these days of erotic exploitation she would have reached a depth and a corrosive energy in her expressions which would have made our greatest masters and mistresses of those leanings and those inspirations pale with envy.

CHAPTER VII

OUR last grouping of the lives and work of those who have place—more or less important—in these early American literary annals, had only one very conspicuous name—that of Irving. This is associated by very charming alliances with our early Manhattan growth and traditions; if not Dutch himself, he has made Wolfert's Roost a joy and a boast for all good Dutchmen; while his Alhambra leanings and labors will carry an Andalusian fragrance into all our studies of Spanish history. Perhaps he has done a still worthier work, though lacking its high distinction, in cementing all the rural loves and traditions of middle England with the tenderest and strongest rural proclivities of every inheritor of Saxon speech wherever he may wander.

If the good lady of Sigourney name and fame was not among the loftiest of singers,

SOME AMERICAN AUTHORS

she was good, kindly—wrapping all her friendships in Christian robes—putting Biblical flavors of grace into her elegies, and jubilant epithalamiums; sowing homely New England wood-flowers, and garden garlands, in decorative rhyme, all abroad, as she walked through the orderly paths of a well-balanced life. She won too the reverential regard of those good, non-critical souls who loved the story of good deeds told in modestly musical numbers, and blazing here and there with the gold and azure of the New Jerusalem.

Peter Parley kept even step with her in a good many boyish memories: if the old garrulous traveller told of battles and of thousands slain—the good Sigourney let flow a tender requiem; if the Parley lighted up the hills and valleys of a new geography—the Sigourney poured over the rivers and lakes the baptismal melodies that lurked in the names of Monongahela and Ontario.

The fainter though not feebler notes of three other singers closed our record. The careers of these, measuring from birth to death, took us past the era of Washington's presidency, past the times of Adams and Jefferson (with their Democratic and Federal strifes), past the times of Madison and his uneasy man-

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agement of a war with England; past Monroe and his doctrine (which belonged more fitly to his successor, Quincy Adams, who had been his Secretary of State); and past the time of Jackson, with his war upon the Bank; and brought us to days in which Martin Van Buren—keen lawyer and shrewd diplomat—held for four years the presidential chair, yielding it to that poor old General Harrison, who gained executive power only to drop it from a hand palsied by death. We turn the page now upon new names.

MISS. CATHARINE SEDGWICK

THE Sedgwicks were important people of Massachusetts in early colonial times; the name was associated with that of the Winthrops in iron-making; later there was a drifting of a branch of the family to Hartford, and thence to the bleak hills of Cornwall; and, finally, such a taking possession of the valleys of the beautiful mountain-slopes of Berkshire, between Stockbridge and Lenox, as made that region, for a time, the bailiwick of the family. Jocular visitors in those parts, in the first quarter of this century, used to report that the insect-choristers in all the trees, in all the even-

MISS SEDGWICK

tides of summer, chanted and chirped only
“Sedg-wick—Sedg-wick—Sedg-wick!”

Miss Catharine,¹ a notable and gifted member of the family, was born there in the year (1789) of the sacking of the Bastille. Her father was for several years at Yale²—was one of the old Continental Congress—had the confidence of Washington—was active in the suppression of that “Shay’s Rebellion” which disturbed the quietude of the Berkshire region in 1787, and died a Judge of the Supreme Court.

The daughter had all the advantages of the best teachers in her day, and for thirty years thereafter taught in her turn. Her life was passed mostly between Stockbridge and Lenox, with visits to Boston, where she had many relatives—to New York, where her brother was an eminent lawyer—to Washington, where her father was successively Representative and

¹ Catharine Maria Sedgwick, b 1789; d. 1867. *New England Tale*, 1822; *Hope Leslie*, 1827; *Live and Let Live*, 1837. *Life and Letters*, by Miss Dewey, 1871.

² He was dismissed in 1765 for “some boyish gaieties”; this was the last year of the incumbency of President Clap, who was very likely out of temper, by reason of his theologic battles of that year. Miss Sedgwick in her *Recollections* says:—“I received the impression—perhaps wrong—that he [the President] was a compound of pedagogue and granny.”

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Senator, and to Europe, where her early books and her womanly dignities opened the way to a most cordial reception.

Her first book was a *New England Tale* marked by strong religious bearings, which had been quickened and colored by her devotion to the teachings of Dr. Channing; it had such success as warranted her in publishing a few years later (1827) her novel of *Redwood*; and this was followed very sharply by her better-known story of *Hope Leslie*. This rallied to her a great army of admirers; and I can recall even now with vividness the great relish with which—more than sixty years ago—a company of school-boys in the middle of New England, devoured its pages, and lavished their noisy sympathies upon the perils of “Everell,” or the daring of the generous “Maganisca.”

Miss Sedgwick could write with feeling and potency about Indian life; her childhood in the wilds of Berkshire was not without its fresh traditions of Indian alarms, and of the terrors of the bloody Mohawks. There were not a few who counted her pictures of savage life more truthful than those of Cooper; while by many European critics her early tales were unhesitatingly attributed to the author of *The Pioneers*. Other novels followed from the

MISS SEDGWICK

Sedgwick eyrie among the Berkshire hills—chiefest among them the *Linwoods* which challenged attention, and held it, when *Woodstock* and the *Fair Maid of Perth* were still fresh from Abbotsford.

But even worthier of mention than her novels, are those little social tractates of *Live and Let Live*, or, *The Rich Poor Man and Poor Rich Man*, which were full of a sturdy Republican sentiment, and of common-sense, and of a rich humanity—all which commended them at once to thousands of readers. They had not the picturesqueness of her larger books; they may have lacked strong literary blazon; they may have savored somewhat of the Edgeworth preaching methods; but they were honest; they were true; and they set forth, in a high American and republican strain, such an exhibit of social and domestic duties as challenged the attention and approval of all good humanitarians at home or abroad.

Have these little books lost all their savor? And might they not possibly be read with profit, as antidotes to the ambitious fevers of our modern “Colonial Dames?”

I think this fine old lady of the Berkshire highlands and of high humanities would have looked scowlingly from under her mob-cap (if

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it be a mob-cap, Miss Bremer has decked her withal) upon the paltry strifes and jealousies which go to the social rivalries of our associated “Dames” and “Daughters.”

THE HISTORIAN PRESCOTT

THACKERAY says, somewhere in the *Virginians*, that he saw once over the mantel of an American author whom he visited, two swords crossed; one of these swords had been drawn at Bunker Hill by General Prescott (the grandfather of his host); and the other was the side-arm of Captain Linzee (the grandfather of his hostess), who commanded one of the British ships, which in 1775, had poured shot upon the American redoubts. The swords now hang upon the walls of the Massachusetts Historical Society—one a legacy from the author of *Ferdinand and Isabella*,¹ the other, a gift from his widow and children. Prescott inherited a great colonial name, and a country estate (Pepperell) near the south border of New Hampshire, where he may have revolved

¹ William H. Prescott, b. 1796; d. 1859. *Ferdinand and Isabella*, 1837. *Conquest of Mexico*, 1843. *Conquest of Peru*, 1847. *Reign of Philip II.*, 1855. *Life*, by George Ticknor, 1864.



William Hickling Prescott

PREScott's BLINDNESS

and elaborated many of those Castilian and South American word-pictures which illustrated his histories. His boyhood was passed "in the purple," and with such tutoring, and mate-fellows, as put him on easy terms with the studies and classes of Harvard. Perhaps he carried thither a little too much of that gentlemanly pride which disdained the struggle to be foremost; fair standing, however, he won without chafing; and there were cheery, sparkling social qualities in him that lighted up his scholarship. But the greatest mishap of his life befell him at college; it was in his junior year (he scarce seventeen at that date); there had been a student's frolic in the College Commons—a battle of bread-throwing, in which, however, young Prescott was not personally engaged; but, turning suddenly as he passed out of the hall, a hard "chunk" struck him full in the left eye and felled him to the ground. There was no apparent wound, but the sight in that eye was gone forever.

After a fortnight, he resumed his place in the class-rooms and struggled cheerily and manfully with his disabled vision; but new complications arose—perhaps sympathetic, perhaps rheumatic—and he entered upon his life-long battle; somewhat almost utterly

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blind; again, seeing fairly for an hour or two hours in the day; but trusting mainly to his ear and to the voice of salaried readers for the accumulation of that historic material which he deployed—page on page—and volume after volume—in his charming books. His friend Ticknor told the story of all with an admiring particularity which we have followed, but cannot repeat.

Through all, nothing is more wonderful, and nothing so quickens our esteem for the author, as the delightful, cheery, sunshiny letters which—from beginning to end—he sends from his darkened room—written from between the rods of the blindman's guide.¹ A winter in the Azores, and a stay the following year in London, contributed to his diversions and education; but—notwithstanding best surgical advice—did not help his impaired vision. He is described in those days as a noticeably handsome man, tall, with brown hair, regular features, and the complexion of a woman; following vigorous method in his diet and dress—his clothes being scheduled by

¹ A machine—called a Noctograph—to aid the blind in writing; it is fully described, and the circumstances under which Mr. Prescott first employed it set forth, in Ticknor's *Life*, pp. 116-17.

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

weight, and his daily wear guided by the thermometer; never exceeding his one or two glasses—as the case might be—of Madeira or sherry, and keeping by similar regimen all his life through.

In 1820 he married—the alliance a blessed one from beginning to end. The explorations of his friend Ticknor in Spanish literature warped his literary ambitions (which had airing in the *Club-room*) toward Southern Europe and its Chronicles. But it was not until 1826 that he decided—after many doubts and flutterings of mind—upon the picturesque subject of *Ferdinand and Isabella*. Eight years and more of diligent toil were given to it—toil utterly unsuspected by most of his friends, who had begun to reckon him an idler, and a do-nothing.

We all know of its success and of the further success of his *Mexico, Peru, and Philip II.*¹—marking by long terms, a score of years, and tempting the learned societies of Europe to grapple this author to their membership. His books are still well accredited, and no explorer in the regions he traversed—with his crippled sight—wanders thither without making them

¹ The last volume of this book left incomplete at his death.

his companions and guides. In a private letter, written when engaged on his Spanish studies, he says: "Dr. Johnson declares (in *Life of Milton*) 'no blind man can write a history.'" What if this dogmatic utterance of the great lexicographer prompted an ambition to discredit and annul it, on the part of the young historian!

It is too late to criticise Mr. Prescott's books; they fill a permanent place in our literature; but for my own part I cannot help wishing that he had put into them somewhat less of conventional historic dignity and pomp of language; less of sonorous Latinity, and more of sharp Saxonism; less of the starched buckram of great, "fine" writers, and more of the fluent, easy graces which he pours over his journalism and his letters. But he was always a stickler for etiquette—from a swallow-tail coat, to the fingering of a wine-glass.

In the early part of 1858, while engaged upon his *Philip*, he suffered an attack of apoplexy, not very serious, but warning, and compelling a new regimen of diet and work. A year later the final stroke came—sudden and sure; there was no long-continued suffering; and for his devoted household—no burden of

WILLIAM C. BRYANT

cares—no harrowing alternations of hopes and fears,—all quite as he had wished.¹

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

IF Mr. Prescott was an excellent type of the Bostonian—showing his culture, his aplomb, his fastidiousness and all the reserves of Beacon Street, we may safely reckon the poet Bryant² as a typical New Englander—with his pluck, his persistence, his large inquisitiveness, his practicalities, his shrewdness, and a Puritanism that colored his political beliefs—that undervalued Chesterfieldian graces, and suffused his rhythmic utterances with a religious glow.

¹ His biographer makes the curious statement (page 414) that Mr. Prescott had a shuddering dread of premature burial, and charged his family to take such precaution as would forbid all possibility of this. Accordingly—though death was undoubted—an important vein was severed, so that in the event of revival—there would be no return to consciousness, before life should have oozed away.

² Wm. C. Bryant, b. 1794; d. 1878. *The Embargo*, 1808; "Thanatopsis," 1817; First Collected Poems, 1821; *Letters of a Traveller*, 1852; *Homer*, 1870-72. *Life*, by Godwin (2 vols.), 1883; *Life*, by John Bigelow, 1887; Wilson's *Bryant and His Friends*, 1886.

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I have spoken of the establishment of the *North American Review*, somewhere about 1815, which had developed under the auspices of such men as Tudor and Dana, with a clever young lawyer, Willard Phillips, as office manager. To this latter came one day, in 1817, a middle-aged gentleman from the hill country bordering upon Berkshire, who produced from his voluminous pocket-book, with an eager assurance, one or two poems in beautiful, even script, which he offered for publication. There was a richness in them, and a finish quite out of the common; the editor marked them for issue; but the cautious Dana declared there must be a mistake—no American was equal to such verse.

One of those poems was the “*Thanatopsis*,” and it had been written some years before by a son of the middle-aged gentleman, who was eager that others should share his admiration; and it was shared by the whole reading world—making the first step in the march toward a great fame which was taken by William Cullen Bryant.

He was the son of a country doctor—the same who had brought over, clandestinely, the smoothly writ poems from his home in Cummington to Boston. The poet had lived, as a

BRYANT AS LAWYER

boy, a narrowed life—except the hills and the sunsets of his home in Western Hampshire. His educational advantages had been limited and fitful; the private teachings of some clerical kinsmen had counted for a part; so had the father's little library; and the great, breezy landscapes where he had watched migrating water-fowl trailing their flight across the sky, and blue-fringed gentians shivering in autumn winds along the high-roads. At a very early day (when only fourteen) he had put the fierce Federalism to which he had been born and bred, into sharp verses—consigning President Jefferson to the

“Wild wastes of Louisiana bogs—”

and two years after these verses were published by his admiring father, he entered the Sophomore Class of Williams College (1810); hoping to supplement his experience there with two years more at Yale. This, the fortunes of the family forbade; so he enters upon the study of law, here and there, under the wing of established practitioners—not holding himself free from the political epidemics of the day, and indulging in sharp diatribes against “His Imbecility,” President Madison—who, in

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New England eyes, is thought to have fallen sadly away from the true-blue "Federalism" as laid down by Adams and Hamilton.

As early as 1816 Bryant undertook the practice of law on his own account—first, in the little town of Plainfield, and again, in Great Barrington, whither, perhaps, he had been lured by the picturesque beauty of the region, and where in the year next succeeding the appearance of "Thanatopsis," his name in clear clerkly hand appears upon the Record as "Town-clerk."

In the year 1821 he married there—one who, by her New England faiths and training, brought calm and content to his household for a lifetime. Fifty-two years after this marriage date, and when he had been seven years a widower, he wrote (but did not publish),—

"Here where I sit alone is sometimes heard,
From the great world, a whisper of my name,
Joined haply, to some kind, commanding word,
By those whose praise is fame.

"And then—as if I thought thou still wert nigh,
I turn me, half forgetting thou art dead,
To read the gentle gladness in thine eyes,
That once I might have read."

William C. Bryant
with
Frances Charnheld
Dec. 11, 1826.

A relic of Bryant's "Town Clerk" days
Marriage record in his own handwriting from the Great Barrington records

BRYANT AS POET

It was in the year 1822 that Bryant may be said to have set the seal to his poetic reputation by reciting, at a college festival in Cambridge, his poem "To the Ages," and publishing the same shortly thereafter with the best of his verses which had appeared up to that date. The influence of this visit to the East, and of the issue of his book, closely succeeding, widened his outlook upon life. The brilliant tropical flora of the great green-houses upon the Lyman estate amaze this young singer of the "Forest Hymn"; and the talk and suavities of the Everetts and Ticknors, of the Wares and Dana and Channing, make the social buzz of the town-clerk's office in Great Barrington seem dull; besides which he presently loses an important case in court, where the equities were all with his client, and only a technicality brings disaster. The result angers him; he was largely capable of anger. Perhaps he did not swear; but he forswore speedily thereafter a court career and turned his face and his hopes city-ward.

The Sedgwick influences inclined him to New York; a prospecting visit had brought him into pleasant acquaintance with Verplanck, with Halleck, with Cooper, with Sands, and others; so he turned thither to test those har-

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vests which the Knickerbocker skies might have in store for him.

BRYANT IN JOURNALISM

YET his hopes in the new city life were not for some years jubilant. There was a faithful knuckling down to small task-work in various literary ways; association—now with one paper and again with another; he joins with Sands and Verplanck in writing the *Talisman*, a lively Annual; keeps up his pleasant correspondence with Dana; sometimes, of a Sunday, hears William Ware; has rooms in Chambers Street, from which—by craning his neck—he can look out upon the North River; catch, too, a view of open fields of good breadth, where ox-eyed daisies grew, beyond Fourth Street; and could regale his country eyes thereabout in watching the flight of birds from the sunken Potter's Field (now Washington Square), away—westward—across the river to heights in Jersey.

His employment is not constant; his poetry is not rich in dividends; from time to time he entertains the thought of entering again upon the practice of law; but he is not despairing,

BRYANT AS EDITOR

though penning, in seasons of moodiness, such lines as these:

“The trampled earth returns a sound of fear—
A hollow sound, as if I walked on tombs;
And lights, that tell of cheerful homes, appear
Far off, and die like hope amid the glooms.”

In the year 1829 (then thirty-five years old) he gains a foothold, and purchases a share in the old New York *Evening Post*. This paper, which had been established as far back as 1801, was—at Bryant’s advent—controlled, and largely owned, by William Coleman, a clever, brainy lawyer, who had come hither from Boston; he was of the “Christopher North” type of man; loved good dinners and heavy ones; could give and take blows—in his journal or out of it; had fought his duel, too, and killed his man. But in these later years—when our poet came into co-partnery with him—was much disabled as to his lower limbs—crippled for the old activities; but keen, *vif*, and good for the editorials, which stung like a lash.

Croaker & Co., whom we have already encountered as Halleck and Drake, had enriched the paper only a few years before with their bouncing, good-natured satire. Drake was now dead; but Halleck, not yet planted at the

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Astor desk, was still ready to give an occasional helping bewitchment of rhyme.

As for political tone, the *Post* had been from the first arrant Federal—according to New York lights; but had never boiled over into the scalding forms of that faith which had characterized New England's political electors in the days of the Hartford Convention, and which had put the young Bryant—while yet in his teens—upon the lusty vehemence of the “Embargo.”

But with the end of the war in Madison's time, and the advent of good feeling with Monroe—who had Quincy Adams as his lieutenant and virtual maker of the Monroe doctrine—old party lines broke down. New questions of protection and of finance were the pivotal points for a new balancing of politicians—as between Whigs and Democrats; and with the advent of General Jackson to power in 1829 as the successor to Quincy Adams, no journal crowded more lustily for the hero of New Orleans than the *Evening Post*, with Bryant at its head (Coleman dying three months after the inauguration of Jackson).

Leggett, who had written only clever and

THE POST

popular things,¹ was his helper, and in full charge during Bryant's first visit to Europe (1834-36). On his return, and for much time thereafter, the financial aspects of the paper were not inspiring. Times were bad. There was no coddling of patrons to invite support. Free trade advocacy had alienated some friends. Pronounced hostility to slavery interests alienated others, and a sturdy independence in lesser lines of action destroyed all feeding chances in those troughs where the sops of party are bestowed.

Yet Bryant loved independence and its costs —hard, sturdy battling for what he counted good ends; loved enemies if he made them after this fashion; loved his family, too, overmuch; and dwindling revenues in those years put him to solemn thought. He wrote to a brother established in the West, asking after chances in that neighborhood—if he could sell out for a few thousands and transport his family thither. He was a larger owner now, carrying debt still—chafing many ways.

Before 1841, however, and the advent of

¹ Notably "The Main-truck, or a Leap for Life," which had great vogue. William Leggett was born 1802; d. 1839.

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the Harrison-Tyler administration (much to the discomfiture of the *Post*), the money-tide had turned for our poet-journalist; and in Polk and Marcy's time the net earnings of the paper—of which he was virtually half-owner—were \$10,000; in 1850, they had risen to \$16,000, while in 1860 the net earnings counted over \$70,000;¹ and finally—to round out in full numbers this epic of the *Post*,—we may mention that within three or four years after the poet's death, his property in the journal he had virtually created, sold for something over \$400,000.

SOME PERSONAL TRAITS

THE results named would seem to give proof of a shrewdness and far-sightedness which we are not apt to attribute to poets; nor can we say now that Bryant saw—with commercial discernment—the end from the beginning. Shrewd he unquestionably was, with a New Englander's quick eye to the "main chance;" but back of this and larger than this, there was in him an intrepidity, a persistence, a love of justice, a flood of humane sympathies, which—more than any trading alertness—took him and his journal upon roads which led to per-

¹ Bigelow's *Life*, p. 91.

BRYANT'S PERSONALITY

manent favor and to permanent fortune. He was under rather than over the average height, with a firmly knit figure, quick in his motions, capable of large fatigues; counted by most an austere man; certainly not given to easy and uncalled-for smiles; weighing well his words —except some swift current of vexation he could not conquer, spoiled for a moment his habitual calmness; not making friends easily, and never going on a still-hunt for them; never hunting at all, indeed—in the usual sense—with either dog or gun or “whipper-in;” yet enjoying other and larger hunts—through word-books and mythologies and Wordsworthian ranges of skies, and of worlds beyond skies.

Ceremony he abhorred, with all its trappings; never seeking willingly the men or the occasions which involved it or demanded it. Hence—less than most men of his position and influence, in habits of social intimacy with office-holders, or with those high placed or walled about with conventional paraphernalia of whatever sort. Refusing office himself, or chance of office—very much by reason of this shuddering dislike of ceremonial surroundings or of any dignities that demanded them; almost Quakerish in his allegiance to the simple *meum*

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and *tuum*, or yea and nay of personal intercourse. All eloquence and decorative exploitations of speech he kept for rare banquet speeches, or the rhythmic utterances which lifted language out of the region of conventions.

Hawthorne, in his *Italian Notes*, mentions an encounter with Bryant at Rome and Florence, and speaks (the *Notes* were never written for publication) of the "New England twang" which the poet put into his talk—as if in contemptuous contrast with the Europeanized accents of those about him. He was capable of this. His Americanism was largely of the same stamp with that of the Boston boys who mocked and made faces at the "Red-Coats" until bullets flew and inaugurated the "Boston Massacre."

Withal, he was gentle. But few of the world which encountered him day by day knew where the gentleness lay, or how and in what terms it declared itself. We do not lift that veil. There is no need. We only turn to his book and read, in the "Autumn Days," how—

"The south-wind searches for the flowers whose
fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them, in the wood and by the
stream, no more.

BRYANT'S AUSTERITIES

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side ;
In the cold, moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief ;
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers."

Only the entire poem can set forth the tender reverence and love with which he married together the memory of a sister—lost in his young days—and the autumnal fading of the flowers.

It may well be that his scorn of conventionalities shortened the range of his socialities and so narrowed his moral outlook. His pride was large, both as an American and as a man. His early opportunities among the hills of Cummington did not acquaint him with the niceties of conventional law. Afterward, I think, he was too proud a man to study, or to practise vigorously its exigencies.

He was often acrid in his political writing. Strong—fierce, almost ; and he carried his im-

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petuosities and strong prejudices persistently; hence, not wishing to meet political leaders; reticent and shy; having no worship in him of great names or great places; lavishing his best and truest social nature on family and a few tried ones; his cold, doubting manner not calculated to extend this range; his very kindnesses being done in such way as invited no unction of gratitude. There was no flattery in his speech or approaches; scorning this; scorning, too, the conciliatory, fondling ways of those who made themselves popular favorites. Wronging and bewraying himself in this matter, and unwittingly making the ways of approach to his inner and truest kindnesses rough ways for outsiders or even old acquaintances to travel.

ROSLYN AND RIPENED YEARS

THROUGH all the changes of voyaging and the vexations of journalism—whether warily measuring the growth of parties, or wantoning under tropical latitudes—Bryant never lost the rural love and aptitudes which had belonged to his young days upon the pasture slopes or in the wooded dells of Hampshire. Always un-

ROSLYN

der the murmuring thunders of grandest orchestras, he

“Heard
The housewife bee and humming-bird.”

And when—at the lift in the tide of his moneyed affairs, of which I spoke—he bought a country home (1843) upon Long Island, he wrote to his Western brother, with all the exuberance of a boy: “Dear John: Congratulate me! I have bought forty acres of solid earth at Hempstead Harbor.¹ There, when I get money enough, I mean to build a house.” He did not build—all the wiser he—since there was a great, ponderous, Quaker-fashioned house upon the site, which, with certain added dependencies and some properly restrained decorative treatment, made a delightful summer home for the poet and his family up to the day of his death. No man ever put more hilarious honesty into an escape from office drudgery of the city than he into his regular (or irregular) visitations to the trees and pools of Roslyn, or to that other eyrie—which he secured at a later day—on the hills of Cummington. The reader will surely pardon me if I set down—from an old note-book—some briefest

¹ Godwin: *Life, etc.*, vol. i., p. 406.

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passages and memories of a June visit to that suburban retreat of "Cedar-Mere," upon one of the near bays of Long Island—twenty years or more after Mr. Bryant had come into possession.

* * * * *

The weather is doubtful as the little steamer Seawanahaka nears the dock at Great Bay. It is questioned if we should take the open carriage, which is drawn up in waiting, or run on (by boat) to the bay of Roslyn; but the voice of that one of the party who would seem least able to brave storms decides for the drive; and away we go through the pleasant roads that skirt the North Shore—now brushing the boughs of a veteran wood, now rounding a placid inlet of the Sound, passing scant, quiet hamlets, old country homesteads, orchards, grain-fields, wayside churches—seven miles or more, until we rattle down into the little village of Roslyn.

Through all the drive it is plain to see, both by word and glance, that Mr. Bryant knows every forest hem, every break in the line of horizon, every bush or flower by the wayside; knowing these last, indeed, not as so many knew them—by the eye—but knowing their habits, their periods, their varieties, and per-

CEDAR-MERE

mitting nothing in plant or tree-growth under his observation to escape thorough inquiry.

Passing through the village, and bearing north, we have at our right a bold, wooded bluff, and at our left a spit of land between the high-road and the quiet bay, which there juts—with a southward sweep—into the Long Island shore. Upon this spit of land are scattered houses—three of which, by their orderly keeping, mark the beginning of Mr. Bryant's property. Farther on, the land between road and bay widens so as to give room for a couple of placid little lakelets, lying so high above tidewater as to supply raceway for a picturesque mill, which stands on the farther shore of the northern pool, and is embowered in trees. The lands sloping to this pool are lawn-like in keeping, and a swan or two with a brood of ducks are swimming lazily over it; a foot-bridge spans its narrowest part, and a skiff is moored under a boat-house under the northern bank. Eight or ten rods beyond—under the shadow of a great locust and tulip-tree—we catch a glimpse of the homestead. The carriage comes to a stand at a stile under a bower of shade, in which we detect the broad, shining leaves of a magnolia. Along the walk we pass on, and up to the broad veranda, which sweeps

around three sides of the homestead, and carries upon every group of its columns some trailing vine. Rhododendrons—losing their great bowls of blossoms—form a massive tuft of green in the foreground, and are flanked by lesser coppices of Weigelia, Forsythia, and Mahonia. A magnificent *Virgilia Lutea* is just ready to throw out its tangled racemes of creamy bloom. Along the highway, masses of shrubbery and trees make an irregular screen—giving glimpses of road and of the bluff skirting it on the east. From this border-screen, as from the house, the ground sweeps easily, in its own natural contours, down to the basin of the lake—whose supporting dyke, against the bay-shore, is clothed with mingled evergreen and deciduous foliage, out of which peep the chimney-tops and gables of a cottage.

Yet withal, there is no martinet-like precision in the keeping of either lawn or walks; everywhere turf and garden carry the home-like invitingness of look which testifies to the mastership of one who loves the country and its delights—and *not* to the mastership of a gardener who pares the walks and the sod to a nicety that warns one, and never invites.

The poet not only loves the trees—their shadows and their fruits—but he brings them

BRYANT'S LOVE OF TREES

under a kindly inquisition; he tests their capacity for change of latitude; we see the persimmon in his grounds, and the medlar—making brave push against the rigors of the North—and the Spanish chestnut and Madeira nut, and Southern Pecan; he giving eager watch to all these, and recording their failures or sufficiencies.

The poet calls attention, also, to the differences between varieties—as the Scotch and Norway, and sycamore and silver and cut-leaved maples; noting yet farther the minor differences, in varieties of the same species—marked by subdivision of the leaf, or striation of the bark, or times or tones of autumn coloring.¹ All these things he studied as closely and lovingly as the habits of the Bob o' Lincoln, which, from the swaying top of some pendulous tree, dropped his silvery, “Chee! Chee! Chee!”

Shall we go indoors at Cedar-Mere—only for such broad mention, as will not offend against the rites of hospitality? A great, wel-

¹ A well-known cultivator—once at the head of one of the largest commercial nurseries of the country—assured me that no visitor brought such a discerning and discriminating eye to an inspection of his plants and culture as Mr. Bryant. “Nothing,” said he, “escapes him.”

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coming blaze is upon the parlor hearth—a pre-
vision against the damp evenings of early
June; piquant souvenirs of wide travel arrest
the eye; dashes of water-color, which friendly
artists have contributed to the cheer of the
master; a bit of ruin, which may be the Roman
Forum; a blaze of sunset, which may hover
over the blue waters of Capri, or haply a stretch
of the Rhone at Avignon; over the mantel a
photograph (from the fresco) of that wonder-
ful Aurora of Guido. In the library—no af-
fectionation of literary aplomb, or of literary dis-
order, but only markings of easy, every-day,
comfortable usage; maybe a little over-heaping
of such reference books as go—just at this
date—to the furnishing or mending of the
translation of Homer.

From that homely little table—conveniently
near to the Franklin stove—go the easy, rol-
licking, friendly letters which the office of the
Evening Post and its readers do not know. I
am tempted to give an example. He is writing
to his old friend Dr. Dewey:

“ ‘If we will have you,’ Doctor? What words
have passed thy lips unweighed? If the earth
will have the spring—if the sunflower will have
sunshine—if the flock will have grass! You
might as well put an ‘if’ between a hungry man

BRYANT'S HOME

and his dinner! You shall come to Roslyn, you and your Sultana, and shall be welcome and treated *en rois*. If I were writing for the Press, I should not say *en rois*. . . . You shall have full leave to bury yourself in books, or write, or think, or smoke away your time, and I will make a provision of cigars for your idle hours, with the prudent toleration which the innocent have for the necessary vices of others. . . . If you will only stay over Sunday, you shall be asked to preach by our orthodox Presbyterian minister, who inquires when Dr. Dewey is expected, for he wants to ask him to preach. Come, then, prepared for a ten days' sojourn, with a stock of patience in your heart, and a sermon or two in your pocket—of your second or third quality—for we are quite plain people here.”¹

The world had most rarely a smack of his playful humors of this stamp; nor did it come often into his confidences, respecting the next preacher or the last. In such matters he was reticent to the last degree, even with his own family; but reverent everywhere of earnest religious expression or action, under all conditions—keeping mostly by Unitarian forms and allied most with preachers of that faith—but never reinforcing his Unitarian belief by any

¹ Bigelow's *Life*, p. 96.

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bombardment of the Divine character of the author of the Sermon on the Mount; believing devoutly and capitally in Him.

A brave Christian battling he always kept up with his own fiery weaknesses of temper—stronger and more eagerly than with the Puritan austerities which kept by him, and in another age might have made of him another Simeon Stylites. Never so much interested in theologic dogmas as in social reform and progress; emulating, as would seem in such matters, that worshipful Dr. Channing, whom he reverently heard in his young days; like him, valiant, persistent, and eloquent—as against slavery, against Napoleonism, against intemperance; and earnest for that Self-Culture which (within moral lines, and restrained by a devout spirit) he put before all church rites and observances, or the mere “mint and cummin” of Scriptural obeisance. He was tolerant of all faiths; but he loved not the tag-rags of rite-mongers—the purple chasubles, the jewels, the tinkling cymbals.

It was only quite late in life (1858) that, softened by long watchfulness over the sick-bed and last illness of Mrs. Bryant—in “an upper room” at Naples, within sight of the beautiful Bay, and of the smoke lifting lazily from Ve-

THE DEATH OF BRYANT

suvius—he made profession of faith, and invited the “laying-on of hands.”

For him the consecration was significant and real; yet there was no break, no perturbation, no emotional whirl in the calm currents of his life. For a score of years more he battled with the world, and the wrongs and weaknesses that confronted him; loving life and the breezy mornings and the mountain air—loving them intensely—loving them to the last.

Even when the summons came, and he fell—like one shot down—upon the door-step of a friend on a May afternoon of 1878, there was a strenuous rally against the blow—a thrusting away of the mists that blurred consciousness—a new clutch at the little haps and knowledges of life. But the blow is too grievous; for a few days he lingers; sometimes seeming to hear murmurs of remembered voices; and again, he hears them not. Finally, on June 12th, he goes to “join the innumerable caravan,” which, nearly seventy years before, in the “Thanatopsis,” he had set upon its solemn march toward the chambers of death.

Bryant was buried in the cemetery at Roslyn, Long Island.

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